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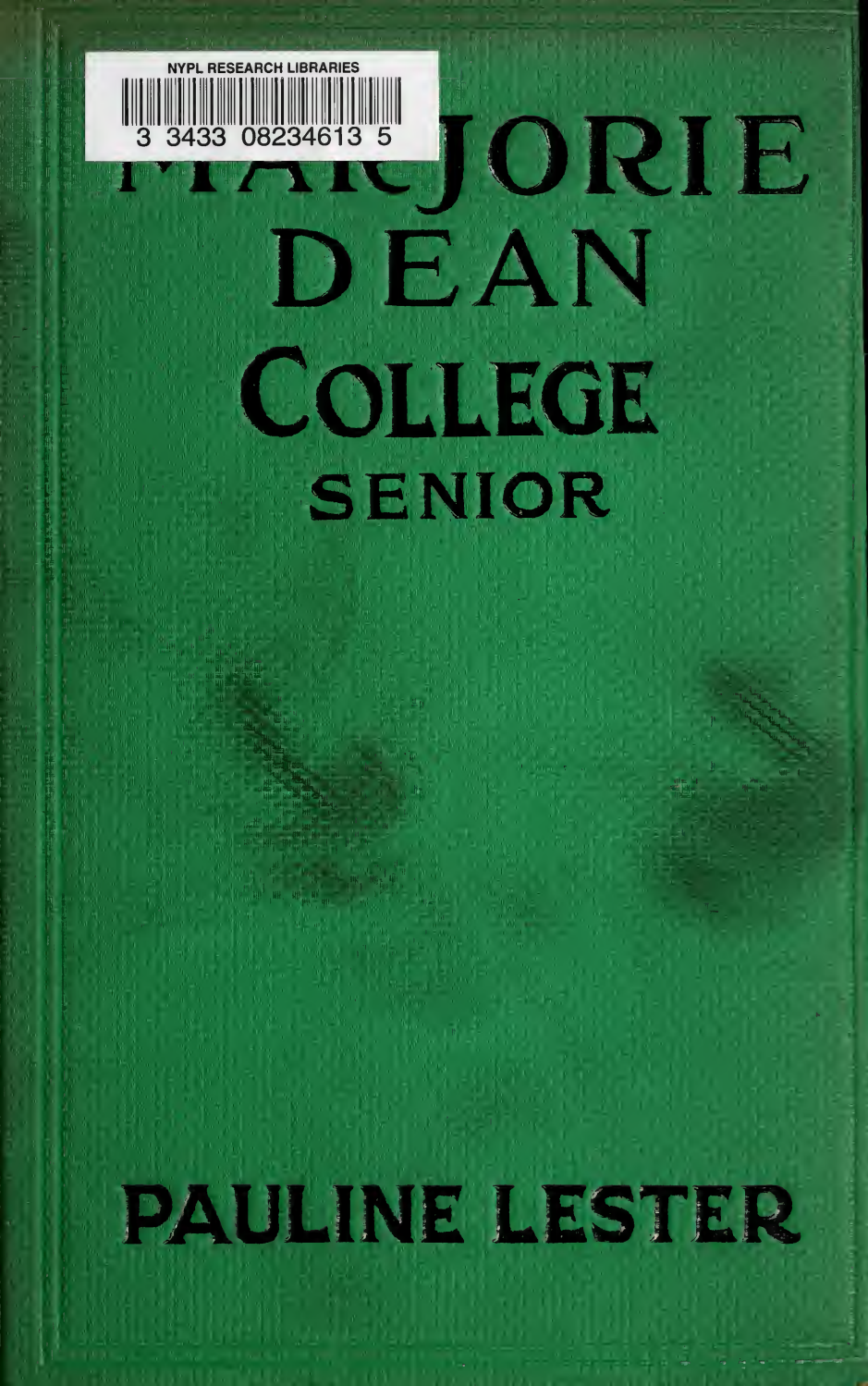

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Marjorie Dean College Senior.

MARJORIE DEAN COLLEGE SENIOR

By PAULINE LESTER

Author of

"Marjorie Dean, College Freshman," "Marjorie Dean, College Sophomore," "Majorie Dean, College Junior,"
and
The Marjorie Dean High School Series

A. L. BURT COMPANY
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THE
Marjorie Dean College Series

A Series of Stories for Girls 12 to 18 Years of Age

By PAULINE LESTER

Marjorie Dean, College Freshman
Marjorie Dean, College Sophomore
Marjorie Dean, College Junior
Marjorie Dean, College Senior

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MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE SENIOR

Made in "U. S. A."

MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE SENIOR.

CHAPTER I

A QUESTION FOR THE FUTURE

"Tomorrow evening at this time I'll be back in my old room at Hamilton. Tonight, the Country of College seems very far away. Tomorrow, it will be Sanford that seems so."

Marjorie Dean smiled frankly up into Hal Macy's rather sober face. The strains of a slow waltz were throbbing to an harmonic end. Hal and his sister Jerry were giving a farewell hop in honor of the five Lookouts who were to return to Hamilton College the next day. Hal was thinking, as he looked down at Marjorie's lovely, upraised face that no one, not even her father and mother, would miss her as he should.

"And who are you going to miss most?" he asked boldly, his eyes twinkling, nevertheless. "If

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you say myself, I shall be *so* flustered. You never say nice things to me, you know."

"I'm not going to begin now," Marjorie returned mischievously. "I shall miss General and Captain most, *of course.*"

"And *me* next most. I'll say it for you, since you have no regard for my tender feelings. I think I ought to be ranked next to General and Captain," Hal persisted audaciously.

"You do come next to them Hal—you and Connie and Laurie. The old guard are next dearest," Marjorie hastily assured. "Oh, dear, the waltz is ending! I wish it would begin all over again. I like waltzing much better than fox trotting or one-stepping. And I love that particular waltz. It is called 'In Sunny Gardens,' and there is a certain suggestion of the title in the music, I think."

Marjorie had sought hasty refuge in commenting on the waltz music just ended. Hal might appear to be joking. Marjorie knew he was not. During the summer vacation she had been in his company a great deal. The Deans had spent the summer at Severn Beach, a seaside resort patronized yearly by the Macys. Jerry and Marjorie had been constantly together, with Hal a delightfully persistent third party, whenever the two girls allowed him the privilege.

Hal Macy had been Marjorie's devoted cavalier

since the beginning of her high school days. Three years older than herself, he was already sure of his love for her. Marjorie, however, regarded him through the eyes of friendship only. She was still too greatly absorbed in college to make room in her life for romance. To her it was a vague something too remote from her mind to be considered. She did not wish Hal to be other than her friend of the old days. The bare thought of changing that pleasant friendly footing for a fonder relationship was repugnant to her.

"I'll ask the musicians to play that waltz again, if you like, Marjorie. Say the word."

Any momentary disappointment Hal might have felt did not betray itself in his tones. It was not the first time Marjorie had refused to take him seriously. He understood her too well to feel more than a momentary twinge over her indifference toward sentiment.

"Oh, never mind, Hal. I only said that because I liked the music so much. Thank you, just the same."

"Have some lemonade, then. I am determined to please you, if I can." Hal took gentle hold on Marjorie's arm and began steering her toward the lemonade bowl which stood at one end of the long room.

"You always please me, Hal," was the instant

response. "You are the best boy ever was, and I never fail to have a perfectly scrumptuous time at yours and Jerry's parties. Now *you* can't say again that I never said anything nice to you."

"That's not bad for a beginning." Hal put on a critical expression. "Say something else nice to me." His eyes regarded her very steadily now.

"Let me see." Marjorie knitted her brows. "Well, I wish we had a ball room like this. We always have to dance in our living room, you know."

"It's a good old room. We have had some fine times here." Hal found it harder this time to be casual, but he succeeded. It was plain to be seen Marjorie didn't care a button about him, except as a friend. He resolved to keep the conversation strictly impersonal thereafter.

Marjorie was hard-hearted enough to feel glad of the change in Hal's tone. His almost humbly-expressed desire to please her had touched her. It had brought forth from her the sincere little speech regarding her liking for him. The deepening light in his eyes, however, had warned her to rush from the subject to one more comfortably impersonal.

"I'm going to be lonesome this winter, Marjorie," Hal continued. "I am about the only fellow in the crowd I've always run with to be left in Sanford. Danny's going to New York to study law. Did I

tell you the Crane is going to Buffalo to take charge of a branch of his governor's business? Harry Lenox is going on the road for their business. And Laurie!" Hal made a gesture of resignation. "He'll not be far away. Only the Atlantic Ocean between us! That's all! I was in hopes he wouldn't go back to Europe this winter. Circumstances, however—" Hal stopped suddenly.

The significance of his tone caused Marjorie to interrogate quickly: "Circumstances? What do you mean, Hal?"

"It is plain you haven't heard something you are due to hear. I can't explain. I can only say this—Don't be surprised at anything you may hear." Hal made this mysterious assertion with the suspicion of a tantalizing smile.

Before Marjorie could inquire further as to his meaning, Danny Seabrooke joined them with: "The next dance will be a fox trot. Bid Macy a pleasant but sudden farewell, Marjorie, and prepare to dance it with me. I am a much better dancer than he. You will have something agreeable to look forward to." He simpered at Marjorie, then closed one eye and squinted reflectively at Hal.

"Hope you'll be in condition to dance that fox trot." The silky intonation was not without menace.

"I trust that I shall. It all depends. If I can

persuade Marjorie to leave this danger-laden spot at once, all will be well."

"Don't be too confident. There's many a slip——"

"I know it," Danny cut in wisely. "I have fallen down three times on this floor tonight. I know all about that slip business."

This confession merely provoked unsympathetic laughter on the part of his hearers.

The lively music of the fox trot beginning, Danny made an elaborate salaam to Marjorie.

"Goodbye for the present, Hal. I'm coming back to quiz you about that mysterious remark you just made," she called over her shoulder as she started to dance away.

"You may expect *me,* too," assured Danny. "Farewell!" He beamed foolishly at Hal and waved his hand.

"Farewell. You needn't mind coming back, Dan-yell," Hal flung ironically after him.

Readers of the "MARJORIE DEAN HIGH SCHOOL SERIES," comprising the four volumes, "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN," MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE," "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR," and "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR," are already in close touch with Marjorie and her friends.

Those who have been pleased to follow her

through four years of high school life have undoubtedly been interested in her further doings as a student at Hamilton College. The account of her three years of hard study and progress, both social and mental, has been faithfully set down in "MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE FRESHMAN," "MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE," and MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE JUNIOR."

During the spirited fox trot Marjorie wondered busily as to the meaning of Hal's remark. Her musings were forcedly disjointed. Danny now and again interpolated into his dancing an additional funny step which kept her attention on him.

The dance over, she promptly sought Hal. Now he was disposed to be thoroughly tantalizing. He laughed at her and accused her of undue curiosity.

"*All right!* Keep your old secret, Mister Stingy!" she at last exclaimed in laughing vexation. "I won't dance with you again this evening, just to pay you for being so aggravating."

"It isn't my secret," Hal began by way of conciliation. "The reason I mentioned it to you was because I was told you were to share it. Go and find Connie. She will tell you. I've told you too much already. I'm a *fine* repository for secrets." Hal put sarcastic emphasis on the "fine."

"I'll forgive you when I find out what it is. There goes Connie now. I'm going to ask her."

Marjorie hurried off to intercept Constance, who was crossing the floor.

"Oh, Lieutenant!" Constance exclaimed, her fair face radiant. "I was just looking for you. I've something to report."

"Go ahead. I've something to report, too," Marjorie returned gayly. "Let us go downstairs to the window seat. We can have a wee little talk there."

Arm in arm the two girls steered their course to the door of the ball room. At the foot of the rather steep stairway was a double window with a deep cushioned seat. There they settled themselves for an exchange of confidences. The full light of the white, sailing moon flooded the window seat, lending to the two young faces an enchantment of beauty.

Constance was wearing a pale blue chiffon frock, embellished here and there with small clusters of pinkish-white rosebuds. It was a fac-simile of a blue gown long since laid away as a treasure of a by-gone day. The worn-out gown of blue chiffon had been Marjorie's first gracious gift to Constance.

"You look just exactly as you did the night of the Hallowe'en party when you wore the other blue dress, Connie," Marjorie said. "Will you ever forget that night?"

"No. I couldn't. I still count it as the most eventful night of my life. It was my first dance, my

first party dress, my first meeting with Laurie." Constance became suddenly silent. Her hand reached out and found one of Marjorie's.

"What is it, Connie?" Marjorie understood that Constance had something special on her mind which she was about to impart.

"I—I—Oh, Marjorie! I am not going to wait to be married to Laurie next June when he comes back from Europe. I am going to be married to him on Thanksgiving Day and go to Europe with him. We're going to study together there."

"Why, Connie Stevens! You take my breath!" Marjorie, who had been sitting very straight relaxed with a little, "Ah-h!"

"I knew you'd be flabbergasted." Constance's reply was tenderly apologetic. "I just had to tell you, though. We would be married as early as October, but, if we were, then you girls couldn't come to our wedding on account of college restrictions. It will be a very quiet wedding. When we come home next June we will give a reception and invite all our friends. I am so happy, Marjorie. I couldn't bear to be separated from Laurie for another year." Constance hid her glowing face against Marjorie's shoulder.

Marjorie listened to Constance, not yet over her first amazement at the news. Hal's words, "Don't

be surprised at anything you may hear," returned with force.

"It's a beautiful plan, Connie," she approved, when she found her voice again. Both arms went out to encircle her friend.

"I knew you would agree with us." Constance gave a little sigh of satisfaction. "Aunt Susan was not pleased, at first. She wished to announce our betrothal formally at a reception for me this winter. She has been so dear to us. She was broad-minded enough to allow for such stray musicians as Laurie and me. Neither of us care about pomp and ceremony, you know."

Constance raised her head. In her blue dress, with the moonlight playing upon her soft, childish features and golden hair, Marjorie thought she looked even younger than she had appeared at the eventful Hallowe'en party. Then, poverty and unhappiness had marred her beauty. Now, it had grown with every good gift that had been showered upon her.

"Marjorie," she continued very solemnly: "I have never said a word to you before, but—" with a slight pause, "I hope you will marry Hal some day. I am sure he loves you as dearly as Laurie loves me." Constance spoke with the sincerity of the truly happy. She had found love. "You have always been friendly with Hal, but I understand you

don't love him now. I have watched you both, and I know he cares a great deal more for you than you for him. I don't mean I wish you would fall in love with Hal tomorrow or next week or even next year, but, someday, I hope you will."

"I don't wish to fall in love with Hal or anybody else." Marjorie shook her head with a decision that loosened a curl from the thick, wavy masses of hair drawn over her ears. She frowned down the remote possibility of such a catastrophe. "It has always been different with you and Laurie than with Hal and me. You two were really lovers as far back as your sophomore year at Sanford High. Hal and I have been just good friends, and so far as I am concerned, we are going to stay *just good friends.*"

CHAPTER II

THE RETURN OF THE "TRAVELERS"

"And is it yourselves, and no other? Where was I, may I ask, that I was not at the station to meet you?"

Leila Harper stood at the top of the front steps of Wayland Hall just long enough to thus interrogate the party of four girls who were advancing toward her. With a jubilant Irish whoop she made a sudden, forceful descent of the steps and landed among them with open arms.

"And I am that glad to see you!" she exclaimed. "Here I have been, melancholy as a roofless banshee, for two whole days. Vera, may the moon defend her and the sun lend her grace, was to be here today. Still no sign of our respected and regretted Midget!"

"Maybe we aren't glad to see you, Leila Greatheart!" Marjorie was embracing Leila with a fervor that bespoke her affection for the genial Irish

girl. "I would have wired you we were coming, but I hadn't heard from you for three weeks, neglectful person, so I didn't know where you were."

"Now has it really been three weeks?" Leila inquired ingeniously, then laughed. "I'm guilty, Beauty. Forgive your Celtic friend. I am always meaning to write letters. It's not lack of intention, but lack of execution that troubles me. But where is Ronny?" Making the round of greeting as she talked, Leila had now missed Veronica Lynne.

"Ronny hasn't come from the West yet." Muriel replied to the question. "This is the first year she hasn't traveled to Hamilton with us. My, how I have missed her! We used to have such lovely squabbles on the train, all the way to college. It made things so pleasant and lively." Muriel's brown eyes danced as she forwarded this naive admission.

"Ronny and her father went on one of their long pony-riding trips," Marjorie further enlightened Leila. "She may be on the way East now. I have not heard from her for over a month. Miss Archer, her God-mother, has only received one letter from her since the first of July. When she is on one of those trips she doesn't write letters for she has no chance to mail them."

"Who's back, Leila?" eagerly inquired Jerry, at

the party leisurely ascended the steps, Leila in the middle of the group.

"Hardly anyone, yet. It is early, you know. Mary Cornell and Eva Ingram are here; Kathie, too."

"Hurrah!" Lucy Warner's face lighted at this news. "How long since Kathie came, Leila?"

"Day before yesterday. She is staying at Lillian's. I saw her when she got off the train. So did Lillian. Result—I haven't seen her since."

"I must call her on the telephone this very afternoon," planned Lucy.

"I don't know what I shall do without Hortense," wailed Muriel. "I'll be simply lost without her. I am glad I arranged for a single. I dont want a room-mate, so long as I can't have good old Moretense."

"Yes; and recall what a fuss you made when Miss Remson asked you to let good old Moretense have half of your room," reminded Jerry.

"I was a grass-green, arrogant freshman, then, Muriel loftily excused. "I had not yet attained to heights of wisdom and discernment which—er—ahem—became mine later."

"When did this miracle you speak of take place?" Jerry affected deep interest. "First I'd heard of it. I never even suspected it."

"I never answer foolish questions," retaliated Muriel. "There are persons who make a practice of asking them. Such persons should not be encouraged."

"Pay no attention to those two, Leila," Marjorie advised. "Talk to Lucy and me. Tell me, are there any new arrivals at the Hall?"

"Two freshies. I haven't asked Miss Remson their names. They have Leslie Cairns' room. They are a noisy pair. I hear them giggling and talking in the halls at every turn."

"That doesn't sound as though you admired them, Leila." Jerry had not lost what Leila had been saying.

"I do not. As a crusty old post graduate, I am hard to please." Leila's genial smile belied her words. "I have been too long used to distinguished company."

"That means us. Bow to the lady." Muriel gave Jerry a significant nudge.

"Do your own bowing and don't interrupt. I want to hear who's come back and who hasn't. Go ahead and tell us some more, Leila. Never mind my friend here. She is what I should term 'voluable.'" Jerry turned her back on Muriel.

"Let me see. Martha Merrick is coming back. With her, Vera, Helen and I, there will be four

P. G's. Five Lookouts, make nine of the old girls here. Eva and Mary make eleven, and there are six or seven more. In all, perhaps eighteen students who were here last year. The Hall holds forty-four girls, but Muriel has a single and Kathie's room will stay empty unless some one wins the scholarship she won. That is not likely to happen."

"I hope Kathie will have half as nice a room at Randolph House as she had here," Lucy said. "I'm going to miss her dreadfully."

Engaged to teach English at the college, Kathie had applied for admission to Randolph House the previous June. It was a campus house given over to members of the faculty.

"You will have to be on your best behavior when you go to see Kathie," warned Jerry. "The eyes of the faculty will be upon you."

"Don't worry about me." Lucy fixed Jerry with a withering glance. "*I* know how to behave. I'm going into the house to see Miss Remson." She reached for her suitcase and leather bag with an air of lofty disdain.

Girl-fashion, the group had reached the floor of the veranda only to gather about Leila and ask questions. Following Lucy's example, they now repossessed themselves of their luggage and entered the house to pay their respects to Miss Remson.

She had already heard the babel of voices rising from the veranda. Recognizing Muriel's peculiarly clear, high-pitched tones, she had delightedly hurried to the door. She met the arrivals on the threshold and gave them a hearty welcome.

"Go up to your rooms, girls, and leave your luggage," she directed, after a cordial hand-shaking all around, "then come down to the dining room. It is only four o'clock. You need something to eat. I will have tea ready for you. If I remember rightly, you Sanford girls have always arrived on a later train."

"Yes; the five-fifty," Jerry informed. "The train schedule has been changed. Our train left Sanford at twenty minutes past seven this morning. It was the only one we could take that would bring us here before dark."

"You're a dear, Miss Remson," lauded Muriel. "The very thought of tea is inspiring. I've been hungry for the last hour."

"So have I," echoed Jerry. "No reason for it, either. We had luncheon on the train."

"Yes, but at what time?" reminded Muriel. "Precisely twelve. Four hours' ride after that on a bumpety-bumpety train is sufficient cause for a quick return of appetite."

"Quite true, my dear Miss Harding," allowed Jerry, favoring Muriel with a patronizing smile.

"So glad you agree with me. It might worry me if you didn't." Muriel returned the smile with one equally patronizing.

"Such smirking and beaming, and so deceitful, at that," teased Leila.

"I'm merely trying to take Ronny's place with Muriel," defended Jerry. "She keeps complaining that she has no one to squabble with."

"When do you think Veronica will be here?" Miss Remson had been listening in amusement to Jerry and Muriel. She was genuinely happy to have the Lookouts back at Wayland Hall again. "I received one long, delightful letter from her in July."

"We don't know," answered Marjorie. She went on to tell the manager what she had already told Leila regarding Ronny.

Such information as she had concerning her missing chum given, the quartette, accompanied by Leila, went on up the staircase and once more made port in their familiar quarters.

"Oh, wow!" ejaculated Jerry, as she dropped her luggage to the floor and sank thankfully upon her own particular chair. "I'm glad I'm here. I hate leaving home, but, now that I've once more struck this fond, familiar spot, I find it pretty fair, Bean; pretty fair."

"I echo your sentiments, Macy. I do, indeed;

all except the Bean," Marjorie retorted, giggling, nevertheless, at the appellation.

It was the derisive name which Leslie Cairns, the leader of the mischief-making Sans, had been pleased to apply to her. It never failed to make Marjorie laugh. There was something so utterly ridiculous about it. Jerry occasionally found amusement also in addressing her as "Bean."

"You are always so good to us, Miss Remson," Marjorie gratefully voiced, when presently the hungry travelers had gathered at a table in the long, cool dining room. The day being warm, the manager had thoughtfully provided a tall pitcher of iced tea and a large plate of chicken, olive and lettuce sandwiches.

"Don't think me stingy for not offering you more of a spread. I wish you to have some appetite for dinner. This little bite will be just a help along the way until dinner time."

"No wonder everybody is crazy to live at Wayland Hall," commented Muriel, in appreciation of the manager's kindly efforts.

"I am so sorry Anna Towne and the girls off the campus wouldn't allow us to carry out our plan for them." Marjorie looked her regret. "We wanted them here, you know."

The "plan" to which she now referred had been one mapped out by herself and Robina Page during

her junior year at Hamilton. They had agreed to save a part of their spending money through the college year and also the summer vacation. Object of their self-denial, to make it possible for Anna Towne, and one other off-the-campus girl whom Robin should select, to enjoy the comfort of Wayland Hall as a residence. Their particular friends had been quick to imitate the example they had set. Altogether fourteen girls had joined in the generous movement.

Marjorie and Robin had been detailed to put the offer before the girls each youthful benefactor had elected to help. Two weeks before the close of college Robin had invited them to a spread in her room and there explained matters. No amount of urging, however, on hers and Marjorie's part, could persuade them to take advantage of the offer. It was with reluctance that they even consented to go on accepting assistance from the students' beneficiary recently formed.

None of the young philanthropists had been sanguine of an acceptance of their generosity. At least it had been made in good faith. According to Jerry it was too bad they "couldn't see it," but it hadn't done any special harm to cut out a few extravagances. The money each had saved to such a worthy end was collected by Robin and added to the

sum on deposit as the Hamilton College Beneficiary Fund in a Hamilton Bank.

"Oh, well, no one could blame the girls for feeling as they did about letting us help them. In their position, I suppose it would have been the same with us," was Muriel Harding's opinion. "It would have been fine to have them at the Hall. They are a dandy lot of girls."

"I am sorry, too, that they will not be here," Miss Remson said. She had been signally interested in the idea at the time it had been agitated. "I expect sixteen freshmen here and eight upper class students. Two of these last are from Craig Hall, two from Acasia House, and four from Alston Terrace. I had a number of applications from students at other campus houses but took the first eight who applied."

"Alston Terrace?" Leila interrogated, lively interest animating her expressive features. "Would you mind telling us, Miss Remson, who is coming from Alston Terrace?"

Every pair of eyes now fastened upon the manager, looked inquiry. The same thought had flashed through each brain.

"I have not familiarized myself with the new names as yet. I will go for my register. It will be a good plan to go over these names with you girls. The students from other campus houses are no

doubt acquaintances, perhaps friends, of yours. As seniors, you will wish to know the names of the freshmen who are to be here. I depend on you to help them to feel at home."

Miss Remson rose from her chair and left the room. A brief silence followed her exit, during which five girls regarded one another speculatively.

CHAPTER III

THE INTRUDER

"I WONDER——" Jerry stopped, a displeased pucker between her brows.

"You are not the only one." Leila shrugged her shoulders. "I do not like the sound of 'four from Alston Terrace.' There might be one of the four not quite to our taste."

"You mean Miss Walbert, don't you?" Jerry questioned frankly.

"I do. She has been aching to get into Wayland Hall. Vera and I were told that last year. And what is to prevent her? I doubt if Miss Remson knows of her friendship with the departed but not regretted Sans," Leila argued.

"She must have noticed her last year when she same to see Miss Cairns. I met her in the halls more than once," Muriel said quickly.

"Miss Remson would pay no special attention to visitors from other campus houses. The maid would admit them to the Hall," returned Leila.

"Don't you know, Miss Remson is famous here at Hamilton for minding her own affairs? She never interferes with the girls in such matters so long as they keep within bounds."

"What's the use in borrowing trouble," interposed Marjorie cheerfully. "Miss Walbert may not be one of the four students from Alston Terrace to register here. Even if she should be, why need we care one way or the other? When Miss Remson first mentioned it, I thought of her too. We all did, I guess."

"And why?" Leila turned quickly to Marjorie. "Because we all know her for what she is, a snob and a deceitful little peacock. In my old age and dignity I longed for peace—but not with that trouble-maker in the house. You remember—Jerry and I both took a rooted dislike to her the first time we set eyes on her at the station. I never found reason to change my opinion of her." Leila spoke with decided warmth.

"Nor I," echoed Jerry. "I'm going to tell Miss Remson, if she reads off Miss Walbert's name, precisely what she may expect from her. Phyllis Moore said she made so much trouble for the freshies as president of their class that if it hadn't been so near the end of the year they would have appointed a committee to tell her where she got off at."

Before more could be said on the subject of the disagreeable Miss Walbert the manager was among them again, register in hand. The five girls watched her in canny silence as she opened the familiar black book and let her index finger travel down the page of registrations.

"You asked about the students from Alston Terrace, Leila. They are Miss Schultz, Miss Kane, Miss Mead and Miss Walbert. Are any of these friends of yours?" Miss Remson glanced up from the page.

"No. Three of them I do not know. One I do not wish to know." Leila's bright blue eyes met the manager's squarely.

"Which is the one you do not wish to know, Leila? I ask you the question because I know your fairness of mind. If you do not care to know this student you must have good reason for your attitude toward her. Will you be frank with me?"

"None of us like Miss Walbert," Leila said slowly, after a brief pause during which she mentally framed what she wished to say. "We don't wish to keep her out of the Hall. We only wish you to know that she is a trouble-maker. She was a friend of Leslie Cairns. It is seldom you hear me speak against anyone, Miss Remson," Leila continued. "Knowing what you had to endure from the Sans, I feel free to warn you against this girl.

She may never justify my warning. Still you have the truth about her."

Leila had not spoken from characteristic Irish impulse alone. A sense of practical friendly duty toward Miss Remson had also prompted her bold stand. The manager quite understood this.

"Thank you, Leila," she said gravely. "You understand my position here. I am not a boarding-house keeper who must have references. I am supposed to take these students changing from another campus house to Wayland Hall on faith. Now I recall why Miss Walbert's face seemed so familiar. I must have noticed her last year during her calls here on Miss Cairns, then paid no further attention to her. It is most unfortunate. Had I known of her friendship with Miss Cairns, I should have refused her application. She would have considered me prejudiced, but I should not have cared. She applied for a single. I had none to give her. She is to room with Miss Schultz."

"I'm sorry for Miss Schultz," commented irrepressible Jerry.

"You needn't be," laughed Marjorie. "She is independent enough to look out for herself. She is often in the Chemical Laboratory when I am. She is a dig of the first water and a very brilliant student. She won't bother her head about Miss Walbert."

"It is to be hoped her influence may prove beneficial," remarked the manager dryly. "I am very certain that I want no repetitions of the noisy quarrel which took place in Miss Cairns' room one evening last winter. Luckily Miss Walbert will have no one to aid and abet her in making mischief, as would be the case if Miss Cairns and that group of girls were still here. I will read you the other names."

Her listeners were not sorry to close the subject. With relief they riveted their attention on the list of names read out to them. When it came to the two students from Acasia House they received another shock. Miss Remson named Alida Burton and Lola Elster.

The manager's eyes on her book, she did not see the significant glances which flashed back and forth at this news. None of her hearers made open comment on either name. While they did not approve of either Lola Elster or Alida Burton they had seen little of them since their freshman year.

Later, on the way to their rooms, Marjorie expressed herself as wondering whether, after all, they should have mentioned to Miss Remson the former intimacy of both girls with the Sans.

"I hated to say anything more." Leila thus explained her silence on that point. "Those two are very chummy. They troubled no one last year. I

heard Leslie Cairns was very sore at their desertion of her standard."

"I'll mention the fact to Miss Remson some day when it comes just right. I think she ought to know it," was Jerry's view.

"Wait until Vera comes. She will break the news to Miss Remson in that nice soft little way of hers which never holds a bit of malice. I am hoping she will appear tomorrow. Not since I left her in New York in June have I set eyes on her. Her father spirited her away to visit an aunt in Idaho. It's our Midget who will come back a wild and woolly Westerner. Can you not see her in a cowboy hat with a brace of revolvers at her belt?" Leila humorously painted.

The idea of dainty, diminutive Vera in any such garb was provocative of laughter.

"Doesn't it make you sick to think that Walbert snip is coming to the Hall to live?" Jerry vented her supreme disgust the moment she and Marjorie were behind their door.

"I haven't stopped to think much about it," Marjorie confessed.

"Well, think about it now, then. I never adored the Sans, but I can't stand *her*. She will stir up a fuss here if she has half a chance. She is as much of a fusser as Row-ena Quarrelena Fightena Scrapena used to be. I'm positively, heartily and com-

pletely disgusted over such bad news." Jerry's tone was half joking, half serious. "I was looking for pleasant sailing and no snags."

"Our best plan is to pay no attention to her," Marjorie placidly returned. "It is her fault that none of us are on speaking terms with her. She began cutting us the same day we tried to help her at the station."

"And that lets us out," decreed Jerry slangily. "As seniors we can look down on her with a cold and unpitying eye. Something like this." Jerry drew herself up and stared at Marjorie with icy fixity.

"Br-r-r! Don't try that on me again unless I have my fur coat handy," was Marjorie's joking reception of that freezing stare. "Excuse me for changing the subject, but let us go over to Silverton Hall after dinner this evening. I'd like to see who's back."

"De-lighted. We won't eat much dinner after those sandwiches. We could cut out dinner tonight and start for Silverton Hall early. We'd then be hungry enough on the way home to stop at Baretti's. Miss Remson won't feel hurt if we aren't here for dinner. We had tea with her. Besides, she knows how it is when one first comes back to college."

"Oh, she won't mind," Marjorie assured confidently. "We'd better tell the others right away.

You go and see Lucy. I'll tell Leila and Muriel."

"As soon as I put away this stuff from my suitcase," Jerry promised. Her suitcase on the floor beside her couch, she had strewed the contents from one end of the bed to the other. "I suppose," she began afresh, as she gathered up her toilet set and moved with it toward her chiffonier, " that I ought to——"

The speech remained unfinished. Suddenly and without warning the door opened. A young woman in an automobile dust coat and cap walked serenely in. At sight of the two startled occupants of the room she set her leather traveling bag down with a sharp, "Well; may I ask what you two girls are doing in my room?" The newcomer was Elizabeth Walbert.

CHAPTER IV

A BIT OF NEWS

"YOUR room? Since when?" Jerry had forgotten all about the icy stare with which she intended to freeze this very person. She was gazing at the intruder with belligerence, not hauteur. Her tone conveyed an ominous chill to the too-sure claimant.

"I don't understand you," she returned with a slight toss of her head. "I only know that I was assigned to this room by Miss Remson."

"Did she come to the door of this room with you?" inquired Jerry bluntly.

"Certainly not. She assigned me to Room 16. You two have evidently made a mistake. I know I haven't." Another toss of the head, more disagreeably pronounced. "I didn't need her or a maid to show me. I know this house."

"The number of this room is 15. Miss Macy and I have had it for three years," Marjorie broke in evenly. "You will find 16 across the hall. The numbers on this side of the hall are odd; on the other, even."

"Oh!" The arrogant claimant turned poppy-red. Plainly in the wrong, Marjorie's civil, utterly dispassionate information fell upon her ears as a merited rebuke. "I was told—" she began feebly. "I am sure the number over this door *looks* like 16. This is the room I *wanted*. I beg your pardon. Still I don't understand——"

In spite of the grudging apology she appeared only half convinced. Marjorie merely inclined her head without speaking. Jerry was silent from sheer disgust. The battery of two pairs of eyes full upon her proved too much for the intruder. She made a rather hurried exit, closing the door behind her with enough force to indicate a rise of temper.

"Blunderhead!" pronounced Jerry contemptuously. "I understand now why she can't be taught to drive her car with safety to the public. She is really stupid underneath her trickiness."

"Too bad she didn't look before she leaped." A quiet little smile dimpled the corners of Marjorie's red lips. She had been merely amused at the incident.

"She must have felt foolish," Jerry declared. "That's what we might call 'Skirmish, Number One.' I daresay we'll have more of them with her Walbertship before we receive our diplomas and hike for Sanford."

"Not if I can help it," vowed Marjorie, still smi-

ing. This time it was at Jerry's funny way of phrasing her opinions.

"Oh, I forgot. I was going to tell Lucy about going to Silverton Hall. I'll put the rest of these things away when I come back. As long as I am to tell her, I might as well see Leila and Muriel. You go ahead and finish unpacking your suitcase."

Jerry left the room on her errand. She presently returned with all three girls. The start for Silverton Hall was promptly made, the five friends strolling bareheaded across the campus.

Marjorie thought she had never seen her "second friend," as she liked to term the campus, looking more verdantly beautiful. A fairly rainy summer had left the short, thick grass peculiarly vivid in its greenness. The leaves of every decorative shrub and tree seemed greener than of yore. It was as though the life of the free emerald spread was rising, not waning, with the approach of autumn.

Arrived at Silverton Hall, disappointment awaited them. Not one of their particular friends had returned. Half a dozen seniors grouped in girlishly picturesque attitudes on the veranda welcomed the callers with warmth. Lelia, in particular, was hailed with delight. Her great popularity with the Silvertonites made her return as a post graduate a matter of rejoicing.

Place was made for the visitors on the veranda

and the steady hum of voices soon proclaimed an enthusiastic exchange of campus news. It was earlier than the Wayland Hall girls had thought. They therefore declined a pressing invitation to stay to dinner at Silverton Hall, and, after half an hour's stay, got under way again.

"Where to?" asked Jerry, as they left the premises of Silverton Hall. "Fortune isn't with us tonight. We are wandering about almost as aimlessly as on the evening we landed here as freshies. Leila, excepted, of course. She was a soph then."

"And very well I remember that evening," rejoined Lelia. "When I saw you Sanfordites come into Baretti's I looked at Marjorie and planned the Beauty contest."

"Yes; and inveigled me into joining the line that night when I had intended to keep out of it," reproached Marjorie. "I was really cross with you for about two minutes, Leila Greatheart."

" 'Tis a long day away since then," Leila lightly assured.

"I asked where we were going, but no one saw fit to answer me," complained Jerry. "I'm not hungry enough yet for Baretti's."

"Let's stop and find out," proposed Muriel. "Only lunatics keep on going without knowing for what point they're bound."

"We might go over to Acasia House and see if Barbara Severn has come back," proposed Marjorie.

"I'd propose going over to Wenderblatts' to see Kathie and Lillian, but I haven't called Kathie on the 'phone yet. One doesn't like to descend on a private family unannounced," Lucy the proper said regretfully.

"Oh, make it Acasia House," Jerry voiced, with a touch of impatience. "If Barbara hasn't come back we may see someone else we know. Either we are especially early at Hamilton this year, or else everybody else is late. No one's home! Boo, hoo!" Jerry burst into a dismal wail.

"I refuse to go another step until you stop that awful noise," balked Muriel. "We all feel *very* sad, Jeremiah, over the absence of our various friends, but we try to control our sorrow. Try and do likewise."

"It is ice cream we will be after buying you at the nice Italian man's, if you will stop roaring," wheedled Leila, adopting a decided brogue.

"I believe the rules of Hamilton forbid unseemly noise on the campus." Lucy fixed a severe eye on Jerry.

Jesting in this fashion the quintette had again taken up their walk, this time headed for Acasia House.

"We started out too early to make our calls," commented Marjorie. "The Acasia House girls will probably be at dinner. It is only half-past six now."

"We'll only stop a few minutes there. By the time we have walked that far we may be hungry enough for a bang-up dinner at Baretti's," Jerry expressed this hope. "Nothing like hiking around the campus by way of celebrating our return to the knowledge shop."

Acasia House, however, did not yield the winsome presence of Barbara Severn. "Not back yet," was their second disappointment that evening. As Marjorie had surmised, such of the students who had returned were at dinner. The callers mounted the front steps to a deserted veranda. More, it was a maid, who, in answer to Marjorie's ringing of the doorbell, furnished the information regarding the still absent Barbara.

"Balked all around!" Jerry dramatically struck her hand to her forehead as the party descended the steps. They had decided not to try getting acquainted with the freshmen of Acasia House that evening. They preferred waiting for Barbara's return.

"Grant Guiseppe hasn't shut up shop and gone on a vacation," grumbled Leila. "'Tis my Irish bones that ache from so much weary wandering.

"Oh, it's up the hill I had gone me fast,
Till my feet were stoned and sore;
And down the dale I hurried last
To find but the bolted door."

She had broken into one of the curious wailing Celtic chants which were the girls' delight.

"Do sing the rest of it, Leila," begged Muriel, as the Irish girl stopped laughingly after the fourth line.

"Not now. I should only wail you to tears," she declared.

"Truly, Leila, I don't know a Hamilton girl I would have missed so much as you," Marjorie said convincingly, passing her arm across Leila's shoulders. "I am *so* glad you came back!"

"I'm thinking I had fine sense," solemnly agreed Leila. "And I shall be treating you all at Guiseppe's this evening to celebrate my own smartness."

Thus adroitly she had taken the dinner upon herself. It was usually a matter for animated discussion as to which one of them should stand treat. A chorus of dissent arose as it was, but her further wily and broad Irish reminder, "Will yez be quiet? Think af me dignity as a P. G!" won her the privilege.

Signor Baretti's welcome of his favorite patrons was given with true Latin sincerity. He had not

forgotten the serenading party of the previous year and asked anxiously for Phyllis and her orchestra.

"They come back this year, those who play and sing for me so nice?" he queried. "Many are the graduate each June. Then I don't see more. Always I know those—what you call the fraish—fraish—mens. Only these are not the mens at all, but the girls. Why you call these—mens?"

The Italian's evident puzzlement over this point evoked amused laughter in which he good-naturedly joined. He showed childish gratification, however, at Marjorie's simple explanation of the term.

"Never before have I understand," he confessed. "Now I must ask something more. You know those girls I have not like who come here? Every one know, I don't like." He made a sweeping gesture. "They don't come here for, oh, long time before college close. Somebody say they are made to go away because they don't do well. You tell me. That is the truth?"

For a moment no one spoke. The blunt innocence of the inquiry was not to be doubted, however. The odd little proprietor's question must be answered.

"They were expelled from college, Signor Baretti," Marjorie made grave reply. "You heard the truth."

"That mean, they can't come back more?" persisted the Italian.

"Yes." Again it was Marjorie who answered him.

"Ah-h-h!" The ejaculation contained a note of triumph. "So I think. But one, the one these girls I *most* don't like she walk in this place one day las' week. This day she is friendly; never before. She say she come back early. I know better. He placed his finger to his eye, a significant Latin gesture, meaning that he was not to be deceived. "She think I don't know. This one is Miss Car-rins."

CHAPTER V

JUST FRESHIES

THE Italian's announcement was received by his hearers with varying degrees of surprise. His sole object in inquiring as he had regarding the Sans appeared to be a desire to prove his own surmises as correct. Satisfied on this point, he hospitably insisted on taking their dinner order himself, and trotted kitchenward to look after it.

"Humph!" Jerry gave vent to her favorite ejaculation the instant the proprietor of the restaurant had left them. "Now what do you suppose she is doing in this part of the world?"

"Ask me something easier." Leila's dark brows lifted themselves. "She may be visiting someone in the town of Hamilton."

"I should think she would hate to come back here after what happened," commented Muriel. "The idea of her telling Signor Baretti she had come back early to college. I suppose she thought he wouldn't know that she had been expelled."

"'Be sure your sin will find you out,'" quoted

Lucy with a touch of satiric humor. "It's a moral warning to behave, isn't it? News of disgrace travels fast and wide."

"Yes, Luciferous, it does. I trust that you will ever walk in the path of rectitude. Let this deplorable instance be a lesson to you."

Muriel had promptly taken advantage of Lucy's remarks. Her mischievous features set in austerity she managed to keep them thus for at least two seconds. Then she burst into a ripple of laughter.

"Don't lose any sleep over me," was Lucy's independent retort. "Just apply some of that wonderful advice to yourself."

"I will, if I ever get to where I feel I need it," beamingly assured Muriel.

Thus the subject of Leslie Cairns' re-appearance at Baretti's was passed over without further comment. Nor was it renewed again that evening. Before they left Baretti's they were treated to a real surprise. Engaged in eating the delectable dinner they had ordered, none of the five saw two laughing faces peering in at them from the main entrance of the inn. Two pairs of slippered feet stole noiselessly along the broad aisle between the tables.

Looking up from her Waldorf salad, Jerry gave a sudden cry that was in the nature of a subdued war whoop of pure joy.

"Can you beat it!" she shrieked jubilantly, stand-

ing up and waving her salad fork. "The wanderers have returned!"

Her shout of welcome was quickly taken up by the others. Leila sprang from her chair and made one dive toward a diminutive young woman in a pongee traveling coat and white sports hat. The Lookouts were equally eager to claim their own. She happened to be Veronica Lynne.

For an instant the hitherto quiet room was filled with the rising treble of girl voices. They had been entirely alone in the restaurant since their entrance save for Signor Baretti and the waitresses.

"Our Midget—and see the cunningness of her in her long coat! Does she not look many inches taller?" teased Leila, holding Vera at arms' length and then re-embracing her.

"I'm not even half an inch taller, you old Irish flatterer," Vera declared as Leila released her to greet Ronny. "Oh, girls, it is fine to see you all again." Vera clasped her little hands in her own inimitable fashion.

"It's wonderful to have both of you popping in on us at once." Marjorie was holding Ronny's hands in her own. "How did you both happen to arrive here together? It must have been sheer luck."

"What do you think? We bumped into each other in Chicago," Vera informed them. "It was

at the Union Station. I had been feeling awfully bored by my own society. Father had gone to call on an old friend between trains. I didn't care to go with him. I sat in the women's inner waiting room trying to read a magazine when who should walk straight past me but Ronny. I couldn't believe my eyes for a second. Then I made just about such a dive for her as Leila just made for me."

"I came as far as Chicago in Father's aeroplane," announced Ronny proudly. "It is the longest trip he ever made. He didn't wish to go farther east than Chicago, so he secured a stateroom for me on the Great Eastern Express. Talk about luck in meeting Vera! I should say it was luck. We sat up nearly all night to talk. We both began to feel sleepy away this side of Hamilton. It will be an early bedtime for us both tonight, won't it, Midget?"

"Um-ah!" Vera put a small hand to her mouth to conceal a rising yawn. "We stopped at the Hall, but you were gone. We knew where to find you."

"Are you hungry?" demanded Muriel. "We've gone as far as the salad. What'll you have?"

"Nothing but some ice cream and a demi-tasse for me," declared Ronny. "We had dinner on the train."

Vera decided on coffee and a pineapple ice. The two were soon established at table with their chums,

listening to the meager amount of college news which they had to give out.

"It must be unusually quiet at Hamilton," Vera presently remarked. Nearly a third of the students were back at this time last year."

"It's a deserted spot, Midget," Leila assured. "We've been to Silverton Hall and Acasia House this evening and none of our special pals from either house are back yet."

"Oh, well, I'm back, and so is Ronny. We certainly count as a couple of someones," Vera laughed. "Old Hamilton will blossom out over night. No one here, then, all of a sudden, everybody back and things humming."

The first rush of greeting having subsided, Ronny's companions bombarded her with eager questions concerning her trip to Chicago by aeroplane. Absorbed in what she was relating, none of them had paid much attention to the few girls who had dropped into the restaurant.

Sounds of singing followed by a burst of rather loud laughter and high-pitched conversation drew their gaze simultaneously toward the door. A crowd of perhaps a dozen girls now entered the large room, still talking and laughing boisterously.

The central figure among them was a girl well above the medium height and rather heavily built. Hatless, her short brown hair curled about her face

in a manner suggesting its natural non-curliness. Her face was full and her color high. Her bright brown eyes, though large, contained a boldness of expression that rather marred their fine shape and size. Her nose was retroussé and her mouth too wide for beauty. The ensemble of features was dashing; not beautiful. She wore a one-piece frock of pale pink wash satin, a marvel as to cut and design. Her whole appearance indicated the presence of wealth. She looked not unlike a spoiled, overgrown baby.

"Freshies, and they act it," muttered Jerry.

The party arranged themselves at two tables, keeping up a running fire of loud-toned repartee. Signor Baretti, now seated at one end of the restaurant, perusing an Italian newspaper, peered sharply over it at the disturbers. The little man knew, to a dot, the difference between natural high spirits and boisterousness.

Hardly had they seated themselves when the tall girl stood up and called out, "Attention, everybody!" She waved an inclusive arm over the two tables occupied by the flock she appeared to be leading.

"Sit down Gussie!" giggled a small girl with very light hair, a snub nose and freckles "You are making a lot of noise in the world. Didn't you know it?"

"Who cares." The tall girl tossed her short-cropped head. "Already now with the Bertram yell. Let's show folks where we came from. When I raise my arm—go ahead and *whoop!*"

Highly pleased with herself and utterly regardless of proprietor and diners, she raised a rounded arm, bare almost to the shoulder, with a grandiose air.

Immediately lusty voices took up a yell ending in a long drawn Ber-t-r-a-m! That's us!" This was repeated three times. As it died away the enterprising leader resumed her chair, apparently careless of what impression she and her companions had made.

Two meek Italian waitresses now approaching to take their order, they hesitated and hung back a little. The yelling having subsided, they rose afresh to duty and went over to the party. There they continued to stand, unheeded by the revelers. The exuberant freshmen now had their heads together over the menu, babbling joyously.

"Are we ready to go?" Leila glanced inquiringly around the circle. "Let us leave these little folks to their merry shouts and laughter. Two of those youngsters, the tall one and the little towhead, are at Wayland Hall. I mentioned them a while back as noisy. Have you reason to doubt me?"

"We could never doubt you, Leila Greatheart," lightly avowed Marjorie. She was eyeing the rollicking freshmen with some amusement.

"I guess Bertram must be a prep school. Hence the loyal howls for their little old kindergarten," surmised Jerry.

"They have a whole lot to learn," smiled Vera. "A few well-directed remarks from the faculty will soon calm their joyous ardor. Perhaps we shouldn't criticize. We were rather noisy ourselves not many minutes ago."

"Yes; but in moderation," reminded Jerry. "All our rejoicing together wasn't as loud as one whoop from the freshies. Not that I care," she added genially. "I can stand it if Guiseppe can."

"Bertram?" Lucy questioningly repeated. "Where is it?"

"Not far from New York City," Vera answered. "I knew two girls who entered Vassar from there. One of them told me it was more like an exclusive boarding school than the regulation prep. She called it the Baby Shop. She said the girls there behaved like overgrown youngsters. That was four years ago. Maybe the Bertramites have grown up since then," she added in her kindly way.

"Again, maybe they have not." Leila glanced sceptically at the Bertramites. They were now en-

gaged in all trying to order at once, a proceeding quite bewildering to their servitors.

"I hate to get me gone from here,
Oh, my stars, I'm glad I'm going!"

hummed Leila under her breath. "Now that is as fine an old Irish song as you'd care to hear. Do I shout it at the top of my breath and disturb the peace? I do not. I keep my lilting strictly within bounds." For all her criticism, Leila was half amused at the noisy freshmen.

"Subdued like, as it were," supplemented Muriel with a killing smile.

"You have a fine understanding." Leila beamed with equal exaggeration.

In this jesting mood they rose from the table. Leila had already pounced upon the dinner check. On the way to the cashier's desk, they became aware of less noise at the freshmen's tables. The concentrated interest of the newcomers had become centered on the departing upper classmen.

The gaze of the tall, dashing girl, who had led the others in the Bertram yell was now traveling with peculiar eagerness from face to face. Her expression was a mixture of curiosity, defiance, admiration and envy. Her glance rested longest on Ronny. She devoured every detail of Ronny's

smart tweed traveling suit, gray walking hat and gray buckskin ties. A gleam of respect showed itself in her bold brown eyes.

The freshman Leila had described as a "tow-head," after an equally deliberate inspection of the departing group, caught the tall girl by the arm and began a rapid flow of talk. Not for an instant as she talked did she remove her gaze from Marjorie and her chums.

Jerry was the first to note they were being thus observed by the other crowd of students. A decided scowl appeared between her brows. She always resented being stared at.

"Those freshies have mistaken us for a part of the exhibits in the Hamilton Museum, I guess, let loose for an hour or two of recreation," she grumbled. "I object to being rubbered at. What?" She mimicked Leslie Cairns' affected drawl.

Her manner of expression, rather than her remarks, induced the laughter of her companions. Nor did she realize that she had turned her eyes upon the freshmen as she spoke, with a look of bored endurance far from flattering to them. Unfortunately the tall girl happened to catch it, as well as the ripple of laughter. Her face darkened. Her retroussé nose elevated itself even higher.

"Isn't that girl with the big brown eyes simply gorgeous?" exclaimed a pert-looking freshman with

shrewd black eyes. The girls they had been watching were now out of sight.

"A regular dream of beauty," praised another. "Her complexion was like a magnolia petal."

"My, but you two are crushed on that—well, quite pretty girl," the tall leader said in a slightly miffed tone. "My eyes are larger than hers," she added.

"Oh, no, Gus, they certainly aren't a bit larger," flatly contradicted a stolid-looking girl with eyeglasses.

"They certainly *are,*" maintained the tall girl.

"Don't grab all the bouquets, Gus," lazily advised Calista Wilmot, the black-eyed girl. "Leave a few for someone else."

"Sha'n't. I want 'em all myself." The reply was careless rather than ill-humored. "Anyhow there was nothing startlingly beautiful about that one girl you folks are raving over."

"Oh, I think there was," differed the freshman with the eyeglasses, with a positiveness that courted argument.

"Do you suppose they were freshmen?" A plump blonde girl with a pleasing face tactfully propounded this question. Anna Perry, the stolid freshman, and Augusta Forbes never agreed on anything. Charlotte Robbins purposed to nip rising argument in the bud if she could.

"No, indeed," Augusta assured. "The tall one with the black hair is a post graduate. I inquired about her. She rooms three doors up the hall from Flossie and me. I haven't seen the others before. I don't care to again." A glint of wounded pride appeared in her eyes as she made this announcement.

"Why, Gus?" demanded three or four vocies.

"Because they are snippy. Didn't you see the disgusted way that one girl in light blue looked at us? Much as to say, 'Oh, those silly freshmen!' They are all upper class girls. I don't admire their manners. They were making fun of us, I'm sure. They have no time for mere freshmen."

"Gus talks as if it were a positive crime to be a freshman in the eyes of the upper class students." Calista Wilmot lifted her thin shoulders. "I've always heard they go by preference rather than class in taking up a freshman."

"They do *not*." Augusta seemed determined to oppose her companions. "The juniors and seniors at college are *awfully* high and mighty. I have been told that they are *very* patronizing to the freshmen. They shall not patronize *me*. I won't submit to it. This business of the freshmen having to defer to upper class students is all nonsense. I shall assert myself from the start."

CHAPTER VI

THE REBUFF

"LEILA, do you think we should have spoken to those freshies and extended the hand of friendship?" Marjorie inquired half doubtfully as the party, now seven strong, loitered along their way to the Hall. The balminess of the still September night made them reluctant to go indoors.

"Not tonight," Leila reassured. "Plenty of time for that. Did I rush into your pocket the first time I saw you, Beauty? I did not. Remember Selma, Nella, Vera and I were at Baretti's when you five girls walked in there on your first evening at Hamilton."

"Give us credit. We didn't whoop like a war party of Comanches, did we?" This from Jerry, who had not yet brought herself to a tolerant view of the noisy party of freshies.

"You did not. We four made more noise than you. That was nothing compared to these Bertramites," Leila's criticism held indulgence.

"You said the tall one and the 'tow-head' were at the Hall. It would not surprise me to find the whole aggregation there. The others may have arrived while we were marching around the campus, making calls on people who were not at home. I see our finish." Jerry groaned loudly. "The majority of the sixteen freshmen Miss Remson spoke of!"

Jerry's surmise proved correct. The same group of girls they had encountered at Baretti's on the previous evening trooped into the dining room the next morning just as the Lookouts were finishing their breakfast.

"The strangers within our gates," announced Jerry. "It's up to us to remember 'em. What? I'm really growing fond of that 'What?' I can understand why Miss Cairns was so fond of it."

"I think it is a foolish expression," condemned Muriel, her eyes twinkling.

"Then never indulge in it, my dear Miss Harding," cautioned Jerry. "May I venture to inquire what the pleasure of this distinguished company is today?"

"Unpack, if our trunks come," returned Ronny and Marjorie together. "I wish Helen would hurry up and get here," Marjorie continued. "We all ought to go over to Hamilton Arms to see Miss Susanna. I'd not care to go without Helen, though."

"What's a journey without the ninth Traveler?" propounded Ronny. "Have you any idea when she'll be here?"

No one had. At eleven o'clock that morning, however, Jerry signed for a telegram. She hustled up stairs with it to impart the good news that Helen Trent would arrive on the four-ten train from the North. The trunks having been delivered shortly before ten o'clock that morning, unpacking was in full swing.

"We'll all go to the station to meet her," planned Jerry. "Only eight of us can't very well squeeze into Leila's roadster. Four of us will have to go in a taxi."

"I'd better call Kathie on the telephone and tell her and Lillian to be ready," was Marjorie's spoken thought. "Lillian isn't a Traveler, but she ought to be asked to join us. She has been so dear to Kathie and Lucy especially, and to us, too."

"We might as well be the Ten Travelers as the Nine," agreed Jerry. "I'd like Lillian to meet Miss Susanna, wouldn't you?"

"Yes; only we can't take her with us to Hamilton Arms without having first explained all about her and asked permission to bring her."

"I know it. Do you believe our little old Travelers' club is really important enough to leave to Hamilton as a sorority? It was different with the

Lookout Club. We were regularly organized with constitution and by-laws, etc. This is very informal; secret, one might almost call it."

"I have thought about that, too," Marjorie replied. "I've also thought we ought to ask Robin and Portia to join—in fact the Silvertonites who have stood by us since our freshie days. There are Ethel Laird and Grace Dearborn, too. They have been devoted to us."

"Don't forget Eva Ingram and Mary Cornell," added Jerry. "They certainly stood by us when we had that row with the Sans during our freshman year."

"I meant to count them in," Marjorie nodded. "Once, this past summer, I made a list of names. There were nineteen, counting the original nine of us. I didn't count Phil or Anna Towne or Barbara Severn. They are still to come. If we leave the club as a sorority to the next senior class, they will be the first girls chosen."

"The Nineteen Travelers." Jerry critically tried out the title. That sounds as well as the Nine Travelers. I don't know but better."

"We really need the whole nineteen if we are really going to accomplish laying a foundation for a dormitory," was Marjorie's energetic declaration. "I mean that figuratively. If we manage to get the site for a dormitory this year we'll have done well.

We don't even know whether those boarding house properties are for sale."

"If they aren't, we might find another site, even better. There is plenty of open ground below them."

"Yes; but it belongs to the Carden Estate and isn't for sale. I asked Miss Susanna about it last June. She knows all about the land near the college and Hamilton Estates. She explained to me the reason for that row of houses along that little street. You know we wondered why they were there."

"It always looked to me as though a couple of city blocks of third rate houses had been picked up and dumped down just outside the campus limits for no particular reason," was Jerry's view of it.

"Well, there's a reason," smiled Marjorie. "The workmen who built Hamilton College lived in those houses while the work was in progress. It took almost five years to build our Alma Mater, Jeremiah. By the workmen, I mean the foremen and more important of the builders. I don't know where the laborers lived. In the town of Hamilton, I presume. Those houses were considered very sizable and comfortable in Mr. Brooke Hamilton's day, Miss Susanna said."

As the two busied themselves with their unpacking, they continued to talk over the project of en-

larging their little circle to nineteen members. Until their particular allies had returned to Hamilton nothing could be done.

"Wait until college has opened, then I'll call a meeting. We'd best have it in Leila's and Vera's room. It is larger than ours. Between you and me, Jeremiah, what ought we to do about the freshies?" Marjorie straightened from her trunk, her arms full of wearing apparel, and stared dubiously at Jerry.

"What?" This time the ejaculation came involuntarily. On her knees before her trunk, Jerry's head and plump shoulders had been temporarily eclipsed, as she dived into the trunk to fish up the few remaining articles at the bottom. "Oh, yes, I got you." Jerry had comprehended a second after Marjorie had spoken.

"What you said at breakfast about the strangers being well within our gates, made me feel that we ought to begin to try to get acquainted with them. We promised Miss Remson to help them get settled, if we could. I don't mind their being noisy." Marjorie paused.

Jerry eyed her quizzically. "You think they are too much like the Sans to be a positive comfort around the house, now don't you?"

"They seemed a little that way to me," Marjorie admitted. "The Sans were older by a year or two

than these girls when they entered Hamilton. These freshies are very juvenile acting."

"They acted last night as though they didn't care a button whether they met anyone else or not. A sufficient-unto-themselves crowd, you know. Still, if we hold off from them, they may feel that we are puffed up over our senior estate. The best way, I guess, is to cultivate them. We can be friendly, but a trifle on our dignity at the same time."

"We'll probably meet them in the halls and on the veranda during the next day or so. That will start the ball rolling. I'd rather not make any calls until I've had one or two chance encounters with some of them. Being on station duty is different. It is a detail."

"I hate to butt into a stranger's room, freshie or no freshie," Jerry agreed. "You know how we felt when the three Sans came to call before we had hardly taken off our hats."

In spite of Marjorie's ever ready willingness to be of service when needed, she still retained a certain amount of shyness which had been hers as a child.

"I am not afraid of being snubbed by these lively freshie children, she presently said, with a trace of humor. "I don't care to intrude on them unless I am truly sure they want to know us."

"They don't know what they want or what they

don't want," calmly observed Jerry. "I am not enthusiastic over them, Marvelous Manager. I'll try to be a conscientious elder sister to them, but it will be an awful struggle."

Marjorie laughed at this. Jerry chuckled faintly in unison. The unexpected invasion of Lucy, Katherine Langly and Lillian Wenderblatt put an end to confidence. The will to labor also languished and was lost in the ardor of meeting and greeting.

Invited to stay to luncheon, the ringing of the bell found Jerry's and Marjorie's room in a state of temporary disorder. Every available space was piled with feminine effects.

"Things are in an awful uproar." Jerry waved her arm over the chaotic array. "The worst is over with our unpacking done. It won't take long after luncheon to put this stuff where it belongs. Glad you girls came to the Hall. It saves us the trouble of going after you."

Ronny and Muriel now appearing, the seven girls went happily down to luncheon. As a result of Jerry's and Marjorie's talk regarding the freshman arrivals at Wayland Hall, both were prepared to be conscientiously friendly on sight.

A trifle ahead of their companions in descending the stairs, at the foot of the staircase they encountered Augusta Forbes, Calista Wilmot and Florence Hart, the "tow-head" just entering the hall from

the veranda. The eyes of the two sets of girls met for an instant. Marjorie smiled in friendly, unaffected fashion, intending to speak. Jerry emulated her example. To their surprise Augusta Forbes put on an expression of extreme hauteur, Florence Hart stared icily out of two pale blue eyes. Calista Wilmot, however, smiled cheerfully, taking no notice of her companions' frozen attitude.

It was all done in a second or two. Marjorie's color heightened. She felt as though she had received a slap in the face. The smile fleeing from her lips, she treated the haughty pair to a steady, searching glance. Then she quietly withdrew her gaze.

CHAPTER VII

MAKING SURE PROGRESS

"Now what was the matter with them?" Jerry demanded, as she and Marjorie entered the dining room. "Were we properly snubbed? No mistake about it. They must have heard what I said about them last night."

"I don't recall that you said anything very dreadful about them," returned Marjorie.

"I compared them to Comanches and expressed my general disapproval of their howls," confessed Jerry cheerfully. "Only they didn't hear me say anything. Leila said as much as I. Neither of us meant to be ill-natured. You know I usually say outright whatever I think in a case of that kind."

"Those two freshies acted as though they were angry with us for some unknown reason or other." Marjorie knitted her brows. "They'd hardly have behaved like that simply because they didn't know us and resented our smiling at them on that account."

"That *would* be the height of snobbishness," replied Jerry. "We'd better tell the girls. They may try to be helpful and get a snubbing, same as we did."

Seated at table, Jerry proceeded to tell the others of the incident. Be it said to her credit she made no attempt to retail it as gossip. She bluntly stated what had happened and warned them to keep their helpfulness at home.

"That's too bad," Lillian Wenderblatt said sympathetically. "It puts you all at sea as to what to do next. You say the one girl returned your smile. Perhaps when you know her better you can find out what ails the other two."

"They can't have a grievance against us when they don't know us," Marjorie said. "I shall let those two alone for the present and confine my attention to some of the other freshies."

With this she dropped the incident from her thought and speech. After luncheon, as she redressed her hair to go to the station, it recurred to her disagreeably. She half formed the guess that Elizabeth Walbert might have made the acquaintance already of these two freshmen and prejudiced them against herself and her friends. Miss Walbert could not possilby have a just grievance against her. Their acquaintance had been too brief. As a former

friend of Leslie Cairns, however, she probably held rancor against the Lookouts.

Marjorie sturdily dismissed this conjecture as not in keeping with her principles. She felt it unfair to accuse Elizabeth Walbert, even in thought, of such an act. She resolved to take Lillian Wendersblatt's advice and cultivate the acquaintance of the black-eyed girl who had shown signs of affability. She might then, eventually, learn wherein lay the difficulty.

A rollicking afternoon with her chums, crowded with meeting and welcoming at least twenty seniors who had returned to college on the same train as Helen Trent, drove the disquieting incident from her mind. Helen was the last one of the nine girls, who had long been intimate friends, to return to Hamilton. Lillian now added as the tenth "Traveler," the band of friends were in high feather. Helen was triumphantly escorted to the Lotus from the station and there fêted and made much of. Arriving at ten minutes past four o'clock, it was after six before she saw the inside of Wayland Hall. Three rounds of ices apiece had also dampened the ardor of all concerned for dinner.

"These joyful ice cream sociables are appetite killers. There goes the dinner gong and yours truly is listening to it without a spark of enthusiasm. I think I'll forego dinner and finish straightening my

traps," declared Jerry. Now returned to her room, Jerry viewed her still scattered possessions with distinct disfavor.

"You had better go down and eat something," advised Marjorie. "You will be ravenous about bedtime, if you don't. We haven't a thing here to eat except candy. As a late feed it's conducive of nightmares, Jeremiah."

"Wise and thoughtful Mentor, so it is," grinned Jerry. "I'll take your advice."

"If I see that black-eyed girl who smiled at me downstairs I shall speak to her and start things moving," Marjorie said with decision. "I won't ask her the very first thing what was the matter with her friends, but I'll do so as soon as I am a little bit acquainted with her."

Marjorie found no opportunity to put her resolve into execution that evening. The freshman in question was seated at a table the length of the room from the one at which she sat. The two freshmen who had shown such utter hauteur had seats at the same table as their black-eyed friend. Marjorie had not even an opportunity to catch the other girl's eye.

The following morning, as she started across the campus with Ronny for a stroll and a talk in the warm early autumn sunshine, fortune favored her. Seated on a rustic bench under a huge elm tree were two of the freshmen she was anxious to come into

touch with. One was the black-eyed girl, the other the plump blonde.

"It's a splendid opportunity, Ronny." Marjorie took Ronny by the arm. "Come along. I am going to speak to them. No time like the present, you know."

"All right, lead the way." Ronny obligingly allowed Marjorie to propel her toward the bench where the duo were seated.

"Good morning." Marjorie stopped fairly in front of the rustic seat, her brown eyes alight with gentle friendliness. "Isn't the campus wonderful today? This is one of its happy moods. I always say it changes in expression just as persons do."

"Good morning." The black-eyed girl's tones were as friendly as her own had been. The fair-haired girl also acknowledged the greeting with a nod and smile. "Truly, I agree with you. I think this campus is the most magnificent piece of lawn I ever saw or expect to see."

"I see where the good old campus has made another friend." Ronny now broke into the conversation nicely started between Marjorie and the freshmen. "Marjorie, this person here," Ronny playfully indicated her chum, "calls it her oldest friend at Hamilton."

"I don't wonder. I hadn't thought of it in that

light before," returned the blonde freshman half shyly.

Both freshmen showed a certain pleasure mingled with reserve in having thus been addressed by the two seniors.

"If you don't mind, I am going to bring that seat over there up beside yours." Marjorie promptly got into action. "Then we can all have a sunny morning confab. It is high time we began to get acquainted with our little sisters," she finished laughingly.

Together she and Ronny carried the nearby seat to a place beside the one holding the two freshmen. Then conversation began afresh, a trifle stiffly at first. Soon the four were laughing merrily over Calista Wilmot's humorous narration of her first day at Bertram Preparatory School when the taxi-cab driver had, at the start, misunderstood her and carried her to the opposite end of the borough in which the school was situated.

"He landed me with a flourish in front of the main entrance to the Bertram Academy for young men," she related. "I saw a crowd of young men playing football on a side lawn. That was queer, I thought. I didn't see a sign of a single girl. He set my luggage down on the drive. In another minute he would have been off and away. I had paid him before we started. I called out to him to

wait and asked him if he was sure it was the Bertram Preparatory School for Girls. Right then we came to an understanding. Maybe I didn't drive away from that school in a hurry. I had a perfect string of mishaps that day, big and little." She continued to relate them to her amused listeners.

An hour slipped away unheeded by the congenial quartette under the big elm. Marjorie made no approach to the subject on her mind. The two freshmen asked numerous impersonal questions regarding Hamilton College and its traditions. They made but scant reference to their own friends except to remark that there were twelve of them at Wayland Hall.

"Look, Ronny." Marjorie pointed to the chimes clock in the chapel tower which showed eleven. "We must go. I promised to go over to Silverton Hall to see Robin Page before luncheon. We'll have time just for a hurried call."

To her new acquaintances she explained: "Miss Page is a very dear friend. She came back to Hamilton on the seven-thirty train last night. Would you like to go with us to Silverton Hall? I am sure she will be glad to meet you."

The two girls, thus invited, exchanged eager glances. It was evident both wished very much to go. Still, for some reason, they hesitated to accept.

"I don't know—" began Calista doubtfully. "Not

today, I think." She adopted a tone of sudden decision.

"Some other day, I hope," supplemented Charlotte Robbins, the blonde girl. She looked almost appealingly at Marjorie.

"Any day," was Marjorie's cordial response. "My room, or rather Miss Macy's and my room is 15. Delighted to be of service to you. Miss Lynne and I will make you a real call some evening this week."

"Our number is 20. I hope you *will* come and see us." Charlotte Robbins emphasized the will as though she had definitely made up her mind to be cordial.

After Marjorie and Ronny had left them, the two freshmen regarded each other in silence for a moment.

"Now we have gone and done it!" exclaimed Charlotte with a short laugh. "What else could we have done?"

"Nothing," replied Calista with conviction. "Gus is going to be as cross as two sticks. She is so stubborn, once she makes up her mind to be."

"She has made a mistake about Miss Dean and Miss Lynne, at least. They are sweet."

"I don't want to quarrel with Gussie over this business." Calista knitted reflective brows. "In spite of the numerous wordy tilts she and I are

always having, I'm awfully fond of Gus. A more generous girl never lived, and she is so square, too."

"She's the baby who wouldn't grow up," Charlotte said with a whimsical smile. "She's good as gold when she wants to be good. She roars like a spoiled infant when she is crossed. The best way to do is to stand by the courage of our convictions. We like these two seniors. They appear to like us. We'll just have to make Gus understand that."

CHAPTER VIII

FAITHLESS FRIENDS

"Leslie Cairns! The very last person I expected to see in this part of the country!"

With this exclamation of amazement, Lola Elster brought the small electric machine she was driving to a quick stop. The surprised cry was the result of being hailed by a young woman driving a roadster. The latter had spied the electric motor containing Alida Burton and Lola Elster and promptly raised her voice to a shout of greeting. The meeting occurring on one of the staid residence avenues of Hamilton, she had had no difficulty in attracting the attention of the two seniors.

"Why, Leslie, this *is* a surprise!" echoed Alida. "I haven't seen you since the day—" Alida stopped, her color rising. "I mean since—" again she stammered.

"Oh, say it and be done with it." Leslie exhibited her old impatience. She was already shaking hands with Lola, who had climbed out of the elec-

tric and now stood beside the roadster. "Since I got it in the neck for hazing. That's what the trouble was all about. If Matthews hadn't been both feet down on hazing the whole thing would have blown over."

"We couldn't imagine what had become of you," Lola said hastily. She was anxious to keep off the subject of the Sans' downfall. She had exhibited so little sympathy for Leslie during her last week on the campus that she feared Leslie might, given the opportunity, upbraid her for her lack of loyalty. "Why didn't you write me, Leslie? I never heard a word from you all summer."

"Oh, I was busy. I don't like to write letters." The reply was coolly evasive.

"Are you staying in town?" Alida was now out of the car and ranged next to Lola beside the roadster.

"West Hamilton. I have an aunt there, you know."

"Is that so?" Lola opened her eyes. "I never knew that."

Conversation languished for an instant. Lola and Alida were both curious concerning Leslie, but tried not to show it.

"There's a rather nice little confectioner's store about two blocks further down the street. Suppose we go there," proposed Leslie. "We are blocking

the road, as it is. Some of these Hamilton fossils would kick if we happened to take up an inch more of room than their ideas call for."

"I know the place you mean. Delighted!" Lola turned toward her car, Alida following. Again at the wheel, she called out, "Park your car on the lower side of the street opposite the shop. The parking's better there. Go ahead. We'll be right behind you."

"Sure thing," Leslie returned laconically. "I know all about that place."

"Leslie has nerve," was Lola's first remark out of the former's hearing. "If I had been expelled from college you wouldn't catch me within a hundred miles of the fatal spot afterward. First I ever heard she had an aunt in West Hamilton."

"Don't you believe it?" queried Alida.

"I doubt it. Les is here for some special reason of her own which she will keep to herself unless she happens to feel confidential. I understand her. She used to tell me a lot about her affairs when I was a freshie. After you and I grew pally, she grew shut-mouth," Lola slangily continued. "I was glad not to be her pal. She took too many risks and she was always dragging her pals into trouble. She thought money would help her out all the time. You see for yourself, it didn't. I made up my mind to keep

away from Les long before the end of my freshman year."

"She thought a lot of you, though, Lola. She really did," Alida said earnestly.

"Oh, I know." Lola made a little bored movement of the head. "After she mixed things up for me and made me appear an idiot at basketball, I had had enough of being chummy with her. Be careful what you say to her today. Les has some kind of game to play, take it from me. Don't be too friendly with her. It won't add to our reputation as seniors to be chummy with her. We'll have to keep her at a distance. Recall she left Hamilton, *disgraced.*"

The confectioner's shop reached, Lola had time for no more advice. Natalie Weyman had once characterized Lola Elster to Leslie as "a selfish kid." In all ways she bore out this opinion. She was constantly alive to her own interests, always placed them first, and callously trampled down anyone who stood in the way of them.

The trio presently established at one of the small round tables and their order given for soda fountain concoctions composed of ice cream, nuts and fruit syrup, Leslie said with an elaborate attempt at indifference, "Well, what is the news from the knowledge shop? Have you seen Walbert yet?"

"She's at Wayland Hall," promptly replied Alida.

"So are we. Lola and I room together now." Satisfaction permeated the information.

"What?" Leslie made the monosyllable faintly satiric. "You don't say so. And Walbert is at the Hall! She tried long and hard enough to get there. So did you, Lola. Where Walbert should be is off the campus. She deserved the run far more than we."

"We are awfully provoked about it," went on Alida. "We do not intend to bother with her at all. Do we, Lola?"

Lola shrugged contemptuously. "I sha'n't lose any sleep over her. "I never liked her."

"You never lost any sleep over admiration for anyone, Lola." Leslie put a touch of malice in the assertion.

"I know it," Lola replied boldly, though she reddened. She understood the remark to be a reproach.

"How is Bean, dear creature?" Leslie simulated effusion. "And how are the beanstalks? Grown clear up to the chapel steeple by this time, I don't doubt."

"They are back. That's about all I can say. We aren't on speaking terms with them, you know. By the way, Les, did Bean stand up before the Board and refuse to answer their questions? I mean last spring when the Sans got in bad. I heard she did."

"Who told you?" countered Leslie, her face darkening.

"Nell Ray, I think. It was one of the Sans," Lola informed.

"I always knew Nell Ray was a talker." Leslie scowled her disapproval. "Yes, you may as well know, Bean did precisely that. It was merely a bluff. I think she had told the whole thing to Matthews before we were summoned. Very likely he sent for her when he received Dulcie's letter. She spilled the story of the hazing and he agreed to let her get away with refusing to talk before the Board. That little prig made more trouble for me than anyone else at Hamilton."

"I don't think so, Leslie," differed Lola. "It was Dulcie Vale and Bess who dished you. You always had it in for Bean and she never made a move against you."

"You don't know what I know, or you wouldn't say that. But it doesn't matter. I'll have a chance yet to even my score with that mischief maker. I'm glad I ran across you two. You can keep me posted as to what goes on at the prissy school; provided anything of account happens there."

"Yes, certainly." Lola's assurance lacked warmth. "How long do you expect to be here, Leslie? Are you going to open your New York house this winter? Now that you are done with college, I suppose

your father will want you to be near him. If you're going to be in New York, Alida and I will arrange to spend Thanksgiving with you. Our house is closed and the folks gone to California for the winter."

"I don't know where I'll be at Thanksgiving." Leslie spoke with cold abruptness. She had quickly sensed Lola's lack of interest in herself, immediately topped by self-seeking. That was Lola to a T. "My father and I are on the outs, if you care to know it. He was furious with me about that hazing business. He didn't care a bit about what we did to Remson. He said that was merely looking out for our own interests. He couldn't see the hazing for a minute. I'm living on my own money. I don't know whether he and I will ever make up or not." A curious expression of gloom crossed her heavy features. The estrangement from her father was her real punishment.

"I shall stay on here for awhile," she went on. "I might as well. Later I'll go to Chicago, perhaps. I have a couple of girl friends who are crazy to have me make them a long visit."

"I am sorry about your trouble with your father," Lola did not show sympathy. Instead she appeared half sulky. Leslie's refusal to take up her Thanksgiving hint had displeased her. She had calculated that she and Alida would enjoy being entertained

over Thanksgiving at the Cairns' palatial New York home.

"Oh, he'll get over it. I am his only child. He'll have to come across with a forgiveness diploma sooner or later. It's the only kind of diploma I want."

For half an hour longer the three sat around the table, their talk animated but fragmentary, so far as sticking to one subject was concerned. During that time Lola kept her ears trained for some catch word that might explain Leslie's presence in Hamilton. Leslie, however, was on her guard. When at length they rose to leave the shop, she had arrived at one definite conclusion. She could not count on the friendship of either girl. Alida would be ruled by Lola, and Lola would cut her dead tomorrow if self-interest warranted it.

Leslie Cairns had deceived them in saying she was visiting an aunt in Hamilton. She had merely taken a furnished house in the town and was living there with a chaperon whom she called "Aunt Edith." Leslie was wise enough to know that, after her separation from her father, she could not defy convention with success. As a young woman alone, she needed the protection of a chaperon. She therefore engaged the services of a middle-aged woman of education and social standing who had met with reverses of fortune. Mrs. Gaylord, her duenna,

never interfered with her plans. She placidly fell in with them.

As it happened, Leslie's father had not entirely abandoned his unscrupulous daughter. He had determined to teach her a lesson. Shocked at her lawless conduct and bitterly incensed and disappointed at her expulsion from Hamilton College, he had treated her with great harshness. He had bitterly reminded her of his threat to disown her. "You have your own money," he had said. "Use it to support yourself. I wish nothing more to do with you. I am going to Chicago for a week. When I come back, I shall expect to find you gone."

Characteristic of Leslie, she had accepted the verdict without emotion. She had packed her effects, engaged a chaperon from a private agency, and left New York for Bar Harbor for the summer. Mr. Cairns had had her every movement secretly watched, however. Mrs. Alice Gaylord would not have chaperoned Leslie long had his private seal of approval been lacking. Assured that she was in safe company, he left her to her own devices until such time as he should find it in his heart to reclaim her.

The summer over, Leslie had found time hanging heavily on her hands. She had had altogether too much time to think, and thinking grew into brood-

ing over her deserved misfortunes. Strangely enough, she blamed Marjorie Dean more than all the others for what had happened. She chose to do so because she had never forgiven Marjorie for turning on her on the occasion when Leslie had led the verbal affront against Marjorie on the campus during the latter's freshman year. With that for a basis, she had laid the failure of every dishonorable scheme she had concocted at Hamilton at Marjorie's door. It was the old story of the injurer accusing the innocent injured party of treachery.

Shortly before her expulsion from Hamilton College, Leslie heard a rumor to which she paid no special attention on hearing. In the stress of the dismissal agony she forgot about it. Later it returned to her. It was the recollection of it which decided her to take up her residence in the town of Hamilton. She also had a certain amount of curiosity regarding what went on at Hamilton. Lola and Alida were still there. She had thought she might cultivate their society.

Leslie was shrewd enough to discern, that, while Lola Elster would gladly accept entertainment from her in New York, she was not desirous of the old campus intimacy with her.

Back in her roadster, having bade the two seniors a nonchalent farewell with, "I'll lunch you at my

aunt's house some day soon," she drove down the shady street half hurt, half amused.

"Lola's the same greedy, grabbing kid," she reflected. "That settles both of them for me. I couldn't depend upon them to find out a thing for me. Bess Walbert is anything but trustworthy. Still I may have to make up with her yet."

CHAPTER IX

CLEARING AWAY SNAGS

MARJORIE had fully intended to fathom the mystery of the two freshmen's apparent grudge against Jerry and herself without delay. Pressure of college affairs, social and scholastic, prevented the solving of the annoying problem. The return of the Silvertonites kept the Ten Travelers constantly traveling back and forth between Wayland and Silverton Halls. With the return of Phyllis Moore, the Moore Symphony Orchestra made itself heard about the campus on moonlight evenings. Almost every night for a week serenading went on.

During the days the two sets of girls took turns doing station duty. The freshman class was larger than ever before. One hundred and forty-three freshmen were registered. Every available room in the campus houses had been taken and a few boarding houses off the campus were well filled.

"It seems too bad we don't know our own freshies as well as we know some of the others," deplored

Marjorie one evening about two weeks after the opening of college. "I have hardly seen those two girls, Miss Wilmot and Miss Robins, since the morning Ronny and I talked to them on the campus. One can't count seeing them at meals, because, then, they're too far away to talk with. I went down to call on them twice. Once, they weren't there, and the other time they had a 'Busy' sign up."

"I haven't been near them. I suppose I should have made a call, but I was anxious for you to break the ice. I am a timid little thing, you know," Jerry ended with a chuckle.

"Well, I shall make a third attempt this evening," decided Marjorie. "Phil says the sophs are talking about giving the frolic earlier this year. There are so many freshies the sophs think they ought to hurry and make them feel at home. That means some of the juniors and seniors to the rescue. The sophs are in the minority again."

"Shall you play escort?" asked Jerry. "If you do, then I'm in for it, too. 'Whither thou goest.' You get me?"

"Yes, I get you. I'll do escort duty if I'm asked."

"You'll be asked, all right enough," Jerry predicted. "Do you need me to help you make calls this evening?"

"I wish you would go. You haven't met Miss

Wilmot or Miss Robbins yet. We will go and see them soon after dinner. I have a hard Philology lesson ahead of me this evening and must study. So we mustn't stay long."

"I notice Miss Walbert is very chummy with that last lot of freshies who came here," observed Jerry. "Funny. the freshies here are divided into two crowds. There's that first crowd of twelve. The other six, the ones who seem to admire Miss Walbert, are another close corporation. Neither crowd appears to exchange much friendliness. It's a case of once we used to be snobbish at Wayland Hall, but now we're clannish. Our own gang is just about as clannish as the others. That ain't no way to be sociable, is it?"

"No, it ain't," laughed Marjorie, repeating Jerry's intentional lapse from correct English. We'll have to see what we can do toward amendment."

Shortly after dinner that evening, Marjorie and Jerry paused before Room Number 20. Marjorie rapped lightly. Sound of voices from within proclaimed the fact that the two freshmen were at home.

"Why, good evening," Charlotte Robbins greeted the pair with apparent surprise. "Won't you come in? We—we thought you had forgotten us," she added, flushing a little.

"I have been here twice before." Marjorie went on to explain the non-success of her former calls. "I preferred not to bother you when you were with your friends. I have brought my room-mate, Miss Macy, with me." She introduced Jerry and the two girls accepted the chairs politely offered them. Marjorie sensed a subtle change from the former friendly attitude the freshmen had exhibited on the campus that morning.

Jerry was distinctly ill at ease, though she strove to be placidly agreeable. She was mentally ticketing their call as a "freeze-out." She had already vowed within herself that this should be her last effort to cultivate this particular crowd of freshmen.

Marjorie, meanwhile, was trying to make pleasant headway against an intangible barrier. It had not been there on that first sunny morning of acquaintance.

In the midst of a lukewarm conversation concerning college matters, the door was suddenly flung open. A tall girl in a baby-blue silk komono breezed in. She was well over the threshold before she took in the situation. With an "Oh, excuse me! Didn't know you had company," she bolted. The sarcastic emphasis on the word "company" brought a flush to the faces of the guests.

"Please don't mind Gussie," apologized Calista,

looking vexed. "She has a habit of bolting in and out like a young hurricane. We are used to her. She is a fine girl, but sometimes she—" Calista broke off in confusion.

There was an embarrassing moment of silence, shattered by Marjorie's clear purposeful tones.

"Since you have mentioned your friend, I should like to ask you if you know her grievance against us. We, Miss Macy and I, have thought she must have one. The way she spoke just now confirms it. We know of no reason for it. It is too bad. We have the very kindliest feeling toward the Bertram freshies."

"There; what did I tell you?" Instead of answering Marjorie, Calista turned in triumph to Charlotte.

Charlotte nodded. "I think we had best tell Miss Dean the whole thing," she declared. "You go ahead, Cally. I'll put in the Selahs at the appropriate moments."

"I will, and glad to get it off my chest." Calista breathed a long sigh. "First, please tell me, did you say anything against us, Augusta Forbes in particular, on the evening at Baretti's. Augusta's the girl who was just here."

"We spoke of you and the noise you were making, but only in amusement," Marjorie returned with candor.

"Gus declares you were making fun of her as you walked toward the door. She says Miss Macy said something about her that made you all laugh." Calista regarded Marjorie searchingly as though to plumb her honesty.

"We did laugh at Jeremiah." Marjorie unconsciously used the name Jerry most often received from her chums. "She made a funny remark about you girls staring at her. She hates being stared at about as much as anyone I ever knew. It wasn't what she said so much as the way she said it that made us laugh. We weren't making fun of you."

"I wish you could make Gus believe that," Charlotte said. "She has taken the matter to heart and is down on you. We were so pleased to know you that morning under the trees. Then you promised to come and see us and when you didn't we thought you didn't care to bother with us. Besides," she hesitated, then went on straightforwardly, "someone told us that you made a fuss over a freshie one day and cut her the next. It's horrid to have to say these things, but I would like to have you know about them."

"Frankly, we haven't wished to believe them," interposed Calista. "We hope to be friends with you, Miss Dean, and with Miss Lynne and Miss Macy. We have heard quite a little of your popularity on the campus. It isn't because of that we

wish to know you. It's because we like you. There!"

"Much obliged." Marjorie put out her hand. "We felt the same about you two girls. I am so sorry Miss Forbes is down on us. Please tell her for me that we wish to be her friends."

"I don't know how anyone can say Marjorie is anything but friendly and sincere," Jerry broke forth in protest. "I have a strong inkling as to *where* that remark came from."

Marjorie looked quickly toward Jerry. Occupied with the nature of Miss Forbes' grievance she had not grasped the other charge against herself to the full.

"I wasn't asked to keep the person's name a secret," Charlotte assured. "It was Miss Walbert who said it. She has been in our room several times. I don't like her at all. I wish she would not come here."

"Will you please tell me again what Miss Walbert said of me?" Marjorie quietly requested.

Charlotte repeated that portion of her former statement concerning the charge against Marjorie.

"I never cut anyone unless that person cuts me first. I would not speak to one who did not wish to speak to me," Marjorie defended, the soft curves of her lips straightening.

"She has harked back to her first day at the sta-

tion when she came here a freshie," asserted Jerry, "only she has purposely twisted the truth." Briefly she cited the true circumstances.

"I think it is outrageous in a girl to so abuse the truth," declared Charlotte in shocked tones. "That settles Miss Walbert for me."

"And for me," seconded Calista. "I am glad we had it out with you." She smiled winningly at Marjorie. "We will try and win Gus over. Now let us shake hands all around and swear fealty."

This done amid good-natured laughter, the last chill upon friendliness disappeared, never to return, and the quartette went on to pleasanter things.

"I knew that Miss Walbert would try to start something," were Jerry's first words to Marjorie on returning to their room. "I certainly put my foot in it by making foolish remarks. I have thought over what I said about those girls taking us for museum exhibits, etc. It doesn't sound well when repeated. I was afraid you'd feel that you ought to repeat it, but you did nobly, Marj, nobly. Those two girls are sensible. They didn't split hairs over it. All I hope is that Haughty Gus won't remember what I say. If she insists on knowing what I said before she forgives me, I'll stay unforgiven."

CHAPTER X

A WRATHFUL AWAKENING

DESPITE the good offices of her chums as peace makers, Haughty Gus, as Jerry had privately named Augusta Forbes, refused to be placated.

"They were making fun of me, I *know*," she persisted. "You can't say anything that will make me change my opinion." This to Calista Wilmot, who had endeavored to reason with her.

"Talk with Miss Dean yourself, Gus," calmly advised Charlotte. "You will find out in about two minutes that she is a perfect darling. Miss Macy is nice, too. Both of those girls are true blue."

"You and Flossie act like a couple of geese about those seniors," criticized Anna Perry, who chanced to be present at the discussion.

"The two sensitive plants." Charlotte indicated Gussie and Florence with a wave of the hand.

It being a rainy Saturday afternoon, the five girls were sitting about Calista's and Charlotte's room drinking the fruit lemonade which Calista had just finished making.

Augusta and Florence both giggled at Charlotte's fling, by no means offended.

"Don't care," defied Gussie. "When I am sore at anyone it is because I have good reason to be. No one can ridicule me and get away with it."

"You talk like an offended potentate, Gus," Calista told her.

"Why shouldn't I, if I want to?" Gussie demanded.

"Why? Because you are a lowly freshman. You ought to be meek along with the lowly; only you aren't."

"I guess not. Don't intend to be ever. I am just as important in my own way as any of those old seniors."

"No, you are not," Calista contradicted with great decision. "None of us are—yet. Those girls have three more years of accomplishment to their credit than we. That's the way I look at it. Besides, I hear they are the best-liked crowd on the campus. Miss Dean is considered the sweetest, kindest girl at Hamilton. Miss Lynne is a wonderful dancer. All of them have something especial they are noted and prized for in college. They have done noteworthy things. We are lucky to be noticed by them."

"Not when they merely notice us to poke fun at us," persisted Gussie stubbornly.

"You are hopeless." Calista threw up her hands in despair. "You will have to learn the truth of what I've said for yourself. I see that plainly."

"I'll never learn it, for I don't see things as you do, at all," Gussie retorted, determined to have the last word.

A few days afterward Augusta announced proudly at the dinner table that she had been invited to the freshman frolic. She was greatly elated to find that she had been the first of the group of five Bertram girls, who usually kept together, to be invited to the merry-making. More, she crowed over the fact that her escort-to-be was a junior. Announcing, however, that it was Elizabeth Walbert who had invited her, she met with the disapproval of Calista and Charlotte.

"How could you accept, Gus?" reproached Calista. "You know how that girl misrepresented Miss Dean to us. Of course, I *know* you have a grudge against Miss Dean. *I* am sure Miss Dean is truthful. I am positive Miss Walbert *isn't.*"

"You don't really know much about Miss Dean," sputtered Gussie, growing angry. "You only think you do. I wish you wouldn't mention that girl's name to me. She makes me tired, and so do you. If Miss Walbert isn't truthful, it won't take me long to discover it. At least, she is thoughtful enough

to invite me to the reception. Your wonderful Miss Dean hasn't invited you."

Calista merely laughed. "You large-sized infant, give her time. You happen to be the first person I've heard of thus far, with an invitation."

The next evening Calista announced, a triumphant twinkle in her shrewd black eyes, that Miss Dean had invited her to the frolic.

"Miss Macy has invited Charlotte. We have all been asked to go to Miss Dean's room this evening for a spread. She and her crowd want to meet the rest of you girls and invite you to the dance. Miss Dean says Miss Harper was going to invite you, Gus. Now you see what you've missed by accepting that horrid Miss Walbert's invitation. Miss Harper is a power here at Hamilton. She's considered the most original girl who ever attended this college."

"Mercy!" was Gussie's sarcastic reception of this piece of information. "Don't worry about me. I'm satisfied. I sha'n't go near Miss Dean's room."

"All right, suit yourself," Calista replied in a tired voice. "I am all through bothering my head about you, Gus. Have things your own way and see trouble in the long run. I'll make your apologies to Miss Dean and Miss Harper, then I'm done."

"Apologies, nothing," scoffed Gussie. "Tell 'em

I said they made me tired, and to keep a hundred miles away from me."

Secretly she was regretful of the fact that she had too quickly accepted an invitation from a student for whom she cherished no special preference. In her heart she did not like Elizabeth Walbert, but she had not yet become clearly conscious of this.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, had invited Augusta merely to serve her own ends. A cutting remark on Gussie's part during their first acquaintance concerning the Lookouts had resolved Elizabeth to cultivate the disgruntled freshman's society. Possessed of a reckless spirit, Gussie would be just the one to help in any scheme she might plan against the girls she detested.

As neither had the remotest conception of the other's true character, they were both due to take part in a summary awakening. On the evening of the hop, Elizabeth lingered at the Lotus with two juniors until after seven o'clock. In consequence Gussie's chums had gone on to the gymnasium with their escorts an hour before Elizabeth knocked on Gussie's door. Always impatient of delay, Augusta was growing momentarily more incensed as time slid by and she remained waiting and neglected. Her reception of the junior was sulky rather than affable.

Arrived at the frolic too late for the grand march

and minus the usual corsage bouquet of flowers which Elizabeth had forgotten to order sent to Augusta, the tall freshman, felt distinctly aggrieved. Not one of her chums were without violets or orchids, generously provided by their escorts.

Courtesy, which had not been shown her, she reflected sullenly, pleaded with her not to flash forth her frank opinion to her escort of these lapses. Gussie, however, was at the boiling point and ready to bubble over at a word.

The climax to Augusta's displeasure was reached when after two dances with her, Elizabeth deserted her for the society of Alida Burton and Lola Elster. While neither of the latter students liked Elizabeth, both were anxious to find out whether she had seen and talked with Leslie Cairns.

"There's Walbert across the room," Lola had remarked in an undertone to Alida. "Let's find out what she knows about Les. We can jolly her along for awhile and then shake her. She's always crazy to have us notice her. You pump her; and then I will. Be careful what you say to her. Get all she knows, but don't give up any information about anyone or anything."

Shortly after ten o'clock Gussie disappeared from the scene of revelry. She was so angry she felt as though her brown eyes must emit sparks. On account of her spleen against their escorts she had

foolishly declined to go near her chums. She was sore at heart and jealous of the new friendships they had formed. Chiefly, her ire was directed against Elizabeth.

"Just wait until I have a good chance to tell *her* a few things," she wrathfully ruminated as she scudded across the campus in the moonless darkness. "I wouldn't have neglected a rag doll the way she slighted me!"

"Where's Gus?" Charlotte inquired of Flossie Hart late that evening. Flossie had amiably gone to Marjorie's spread and there buried the hatchet. "I haven't seen her for over an hour. I'm afraid she isn't having a good time. I haven't seen her dancing much. I asked her to dance, but she turned up her nose and said, 'Go dance with your seniors.' "

Charlotte laughed. "I hope she *hasn't* had a good time. It will teach her to keep away from that Miss Walbert. Every time I've seen Miss Walbert tonight she has been with those two seniors, Miss Burton and—I can't remember the other's name. She's small and dark and wears awfully flashy, mannish-looking suits. You know the one I mean."

Flossie nodded. "Too bad Gus wouldn't be agreeable," she said wistfully. "I have had a fine time tonight. She might have, too. It's her own fault if she hasn't."

After the frolic the eight Travelers residing at

Wayland Hall stopped in Ronny's room for a chat before retiring.

"Will you have tea, chocolate,—what will you have?" hospitably inquired Ronny. "You can't have lemonade at this hour of the night. Besides, I have no lemons."

"Whoever heard of lemonade without lemons?" derided Muriel.

"No one. I merely said you couldn't have it, etc.," Ronny sweetly asserted.

"I don't care for either eats or drinks," declined Jerry. "I am just hanging around in here for a few minutes to hear what I can hear."

"Same with me. It is comfy and sociable to compare notes after a jollification, even if one is sleepy." Marjorie beamed drowsily on her chums. "Girls," she sat up suddenly, "what has become of Miss Forbes? I didn't see her after ten o'clock. I sent half a dozen girls over to ask her to dance. I thought Miss Walbert neglected her. She had no flowers, either."

"I noticed that. Poor *infant terrible!*" Ronny smiled.

"I sent Martha and Ethel Laird to make her acquaintance," Leila said. "Even though she would have none of me, I remembered my fine old Irish manners."

"You're a credit to old Ireland, Hamilton, or any

other spot you happen to set your distinguished Irish foot upon," Marjorie laughingly assured.

"I am that," Leila blandly agreed. "I prefer myself any day to Miss Walbert."

Gussie Forbes had too late arrived at the same opinion. The dance over, Florence Hart had found her curled up in an arm chair fast asleep. She had not removed her party gown and a suspicious pinkness about her eyelids suggested tears. Awakened, she was not tearful at all. She launched forth in a bitter tirade against her discourteous escort.

"You wait, Floss," she said, her eyes flashing. "I won't forget this evening, in a hurry! Some day before the year's over, Miss Smarty Walbert will understand that I *haven't* forgoten it. First time I meet her I shall tell her what I think of her. That won't be the end of it. Later, I'll pay her up for this evening! See if I don't!"

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CHAPTER XI

A PATCHED-UP FRIENDSHIP

"A GUILTY conscience need no accuser." Elizabeth Walbert was well aware that she had been guilty of great discourtesy to Augusta Forbes. She had no intention of admitting it, though. Meeting Augusta in the lavatory the following morning, she fixed her large blue eyes on the freshman in simulated reproach.

"Where did you go to last night?" she coolly inquired. "Just before the hop ended I hunted all over for you."

Augusta turned a stony face toward her. "Did you, indeed? You amaze me," she said with biting sarcasm. "So you took that much trouble? *Sorry!* Since you did not concern yourself about me earlier in the evening, it doesn't matter whether or not you know where I went."

"Why, Augusta!" exclaimed Elizabeth with a rising inflection. "What on earth is——"

"Miss Forbes, if you please," cut in Gussie

sharply. "I wish you to know that I think you the rudest, most discourteous person in the whole world. You slighted me last night and I resented it. I resent it still. I was invited to the frolic by a really fine girl; I am sorry she did not invite me first. All my chums had a splendid time. Thanks to you, I didn't. *They* did not wish me to accpet your invitation, for they don't approve of you. I stood up for you and accepted. Of course, then, I did not go near them. I depended on you to introduce me to other girls, and you paid hardly any attention to me after we were inside the gym. You——"

"Don't be so silly," pettishly interrupted Elizabeth. I——"

"Truth is never silly," Gussie flashed back. She had said her say in low enough tones so that they were attracting no attention from the two girls at the other end of the lavatory. "Now forget that you ever spoke to me. I've forgotten already that I ever met you. Good morning."

Gussie marched out of the lavatory, head held high, leaving Elizabeth red-faced and angry. This was the beginning of war between the two. Not since Leslie Cairns had scored her for her treachery that day on the campus had Elizabeth been thus arraigned. She spitefully resolved to make Gussie a mark for ridicule at Hamilton. She could do it.

Was she not a junior? As for Augusta, she was nothing but a big, stupid freshie!

Elizabeth had awakened that morning quite out of sorts. Her eagerness to cling to Alida and Lola at the frolic had lost her much of the evening's pleasure. The two seniors had declared the frolic "an awful bore." They had danced but little, preferring to sit back and criticize. Though they had called her to join them early in the evening and had been more friendly than for a long time, toward the close of the frolic they simply drifted away from her. So cleverly did they manage she was not aware until afterward that they had deliberately dropped her. It hurt her vanity, but not her feelings.

To discover that Gussie had decamped did not add to her peace of mind. She determined not to attend any more college entertainments. They were stupid and silly. Anything Elizabeth disapproved usually went under this ban. Her head aching from a repast of two chocolate eclairs and a nougat bar, eaten after she came from the frolic, Elizabeth decided to cut her classes that day. She would take two headache powders, sleep until noon, and go for a long ride in the afternoon. All this she planned after her tilt with Augusta.

Shortly before two o'clock that afternoon she went to the garage for her car and was soon speeding toward the town of Hamilton. Her object was

a trip to Breton Hill, a village twenty miles south of Hamilton. First she planned to stop in Hamilton and eat a light luncheon.

Wavering between the Lotus and the Ivy, she finally went to the Ivy. Twenty minutes after she entered the tea shop, a girl drove by in a roadster. Her glance resting on a familiar blue and buff car, she smiled sourly, drove on for perhaps a block, then came back and parked her roadster in front of the Ivy. Leaving her car in slow, deliberate fashion, she sauntered up the wide stone walk and into the shop. One swift survey of the room showed her Elizabeth Walbert at a side table. She stood for a moment, her eyes narrowing, then walked boldly to where Elizabeth sat and took the vacant chair opposite her.

The latter looked up from her plate and encountered Leslie Cairns' eyes. Elizabeth was genuinely surprised. Leslie pretended to be

"Where—why Leslie Cairns!" stammered the unsuspecting junior.

"This *is* a surprise, Miss Walbert!" Leslie returned in not quite friendly tones.

"I see you are angry with me still, Leslie," she said plaintively. "You blamed me for saying a lot of things I never said. I heard Dulcie was the cause of your—er—trouble last year. She wrote me after she left Hamilton. I didn't answer her letter."

"Oh, forget it." Leslie made an indifferent gesture. "What's done can't be undone. You were wise not to write to Dulcie. She was the most treacherous little reptile I ever knew. How's college?"

"Oh, so, so. I am at Wayland Hall now. It is full of freshies. Miss Harper and Miss Mason are there again. So are Miss Merrick and Miss Trent. Four P. G's at Wayland."

"Four N. G's, you mean," corrected Leslie bitterly. "I heard they were back. I met Lola and Alida not long ago."

"You *did?* They never said a word about it to me. I was with them a long time last night, too. The sophs gave their dance last night. Hateful things! They might have told me. I think Lola is *so* selfish!" Elizabeth pouted her displeasure.

"Selfish! You are right about that. She is." Leslie spoke with sudden energy. "She winds Alida around her finger."

"Of course." Elizabeth leaned forward, her interest rising. It was good to see Leslie again. Leslie never cared what she said about others.

The waitress approaching, Leslie ordered a luncheon which she did not want, then turned her attention to her companion again.

"Tell me the college news; everything you can think of," she commanded. "I'm visiting an aunt

in town. Don't know just how long I shall be here. That's all there is to tell about me. But *you* must really have news."

"Oh, there isn't much going on, as yet. I'll tell you about the frolic first." Elizabeth recounted the affair from her viewpoint. From that she went from one bit of campus gossip to another.

Leslie listened, careful not to interrupt. She was tactfully pursuing a certain course.

"Do you now anything about this students' beneficiary business that Bean and her beanstalks organized last year, Bess?" she finally asked with a careless air. "I heard Lola mention it the day I saw her. I didn't care to ask her about it. Last year, just before the Sans were fired from Hamilton, I heard the organizers were going to take up a collection among themselves to create a scholarship fund or something like that. I thought I might like to contribute, if I knew just what it was all about. I'd do it anonymously. I wouldn't for worlds let anyone but you know. Do you think you could find out all about it for me?"

"Certainly," was the ready promise. Re-established thus easily in Leslie's favor, Elizabeth was feeling elated. To be intrusted with this commission meant she would see Leslie often. Loyal to no one, she had liked Leslie better than the majority of girls she had known.

"I know a freshie at Acasia House who is quite friendly with Miss Laird. Bean, as you call her, is a great friend of Miss Laird's. I think this freshman could get the information from Miss Laird. She is clever."

"Ask her then, and I will appreciate it and do something for you in return. Above all, Bess, don't mention this to a soul. If you do, I'll know it. In spite of the way I was treated I have a wish to do something for old Hamilton." Leslie put on a becomingly serious expression.

"I won't tell," promised the other girl. "It is fine in you to feel so about Hamilton. I should call it true nobility of spirit. You weren't understood in college, Leslie."

"No, I wasn't." Leslie sighed her make-believe regret. She had begun to enjoy the part she was now playing.

The two did not leave the tea room for over an hour after meeting. When they emerged to the street each was satisfied with what she had gained from the other. They had agreed to meet the next Wednesday at four o'clock at the Ivy.

"How are you getting along as a driver?" Leslie asked, not without a smile as she sighted Elizabeth's brightly painted car. It was reminiscent of last year's disasters.

"Oh, very well. I've always told you that I could

keep the road if people would keep out of my way. Every near accident I've ever had has been the fault of someone else's poor driving."

To this airy, self-exonerative statement Leslie made no response save by a twist of her loose-lipped mouth. She was very near derisive laughter. Elizabeth, blandly complacent, did not notice her companion's peculiar expression.

"Let me give you one piece of advice, Bess," she said brusquely. "Get through with that giddy blue and tan car of yours. It is a dead give-away. One can recognize it a mile away. You think you are O. K. as a driver. You're not. Don't deceive yourself. You can't put it over me. I know your style of driving and it's punk. Why don't you learn to drive?"

"Oh, I don't know," Elizabeth bridled. "I like my car blue. Blue is my color." She ignored Leslie's fling at her driving abilities.

"It will be your finish some day; on that car, I mean. Get a black car. You need a new one. This one is passé. You could have it painted black, but what's the use? Trade this one in on a new machine. Maybe you'll do better driving a new car."

"Perhaps you are right. I think my father will let me have a new machine." Possession of a brand new car appealed to vain Elizabeth.

"I *know* I'm right. Suppose you were to have trouble along the pike as you had with that driver last year. If anyone reported you the tag that gave you away would be: 'The student I mean was driving a blue and buff car.'" Leslie imitated to perfection a high, complaining voice. "With a black car you could simply scud away from trouble and no one would remember how you looked. What?"

"You are right, Leslie," Elizabeth reluctantly conceded. "I never before looked at the matter in that light."

Leslie was tempted to reply, "That was because you were too stupidly vain of your gay, blue ice wagon." She refrained. Discretion warned her to allow matters to rest as they were. She had no desire to arouse resentment in the shallow, but tricky, junior. Her advice concerning a change of cars was sound and she knew it. While Leslie had neither liking nor faith in Elizabeth Walbert, she needed her services. She thought she had learned by past bitter experience precisely how to manage Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XII

FULL-FLEDGED PROMOTERS

"THE very first thing to do, Robin, is to find out whether those properties used for boarding houses are for sale. There is no use in hoping for one little instant that Miss Susanna will ever relent enough to allow us ground on the campus for any new houses." Marjorie spoke with finality.

"Queer, isn't it? Hamilton doesn't even own itself." A flickering smile touched Robin's lips.

"Miss Susanna doesn't consider that she owns the college," Marjorie explained in defense of her eccentric friend. "Miss Humphrey said Mr. Brooke Hamilton's will stipulated that she must sanction all building, improvements or important changes on the campus. The college has free right to choose everything else."

Not even to Robin Page, her dearest Hamilton friend, outside Wayland Hall, had Marjorie ever divulged the fact of her friendship with the last of the Hamiltons. She would have liked to tell Robin.

that, only a week previous, she had taken tea with Miss Susanna and heard again the old lady's repeated statement that never should Hamilton College receive even the ghost of a favor from her.

"I wish we knew Miss Susanna Hamilton," sighed Robin. "We could then have it out with her on the subject at least."

Marjorie, feeling like a criminal, said nothing for a little. The two seniors had just come from a walk past the boarding houses, the site of which they hoped to be able to use for the building of the dormitory of their generous dreams.

"About these boarding houses, Robin," Marjorie began afresh, desirous of leading her friend away from the subject of Miss Susanna. "Anna Towne's landlady told her that they were in the hands of a real estate agent in the town of Hamilton. His name is Mr. Charles Cutler and his office is on Keene Street. He is the person we must see."

"Since the girls off the campus wouldn't accept our offer, we have six thousand, two hundred and ten dollars in our treasury," announced Robin. "We must keep some of that for our regular beneficiary fund; say two thousand dollars. That gives us a little more than four thousand to pay down on the property."

"It is only a drop in the bucket," Marjorie said doubtfully. "I suppose those properties, all to-

gether, are worth thirty or forty thousand to the owner. The question of the money is easily solved. Ronny will finance the undertaking for us. She is determined to do it. She would give us the money, but I won't accept it. I think the Hamilton girls now and to come should take this debt upon themselves and earn the money to pay it by their own efforts."

"So do I," nodded Robin. "Think what a good time we had getting up the revue. It was splendid practice for us in many ways. Let the girls who come after us have something to plan and work for. It will be the best thing that can happen to them. Besides, giving plays and entertainments helps to create the right kind of social atmosphere and also brings to light the talents of the students. I am for being independent and earning every cent of this money."

"It will keep the Nineteen Travelers busy this year and we'll choose nineteen more to replace us," Marjorie declared with quiet satisfaction.

The Nineteen Travelers were now a surety. Marjorie had carried out her spoken resolve to Jerry to call together those students outside Wayland Hall who had been closest to the Nine Travelers. The original Nine Travelers had all expressed a desire to enlarge the informal society. It had therefore been regularly organized as a sorority one evening

in Leila's and Vera's room. The new sorority was now planning to do great things during their senior year at Hamilton.

"Self-denial last year didn't hurt any of us," Robin galy pointed out. "I saved three hundred and two dollars. The other girls saved anywhere from two to three hundred apiece. Think what it means to our treasury now!

"I saved three hundred and seven dollars. I didn't miss it. I haven't a new suit this fall, and I don't want one. I brought back only two new frocks. Both of them were presents to me from my father. I won't give up going to Baretti's. That is my one luxury. I shall save as much as I can this year, too."

"Wouldn't it be fine if we could make and save enough money this year to clear the purchase price of these properties?" Robin's eyes sparkled at the thought.

"We couldn't unless something positively miraculous came our way." Marjorie shook her head. "It would take all our spare time and more too. True, we don't have basket ball to think of now, but on the other hand our subjects are harder. I wish I were as brilliant as Lucy. She had enough credits to be graduated last June, but she needed another year in biology and physics. This year she will have those two subjects and Political Science. That

will leave her quite a good deal of time for her own. What do you suppose she intends to do with it?"

"Tell me, for I am a no-good guesser."

"She is going to be President Matthews' regular secretary. She talked it over with him one day last week. He made arrangements so that his work would not interfere with her classes. That was really a concession, but he told her he had hoped from the first day she worked for him finally to have her for his secretary. She is so pleased. Her salary is thirty-five dollars a week. We were all glad for her sake," Marjorie ended with generous enthusiasm.

Robin expressed equal pleasure in Lucy's rise in fortune. "It is just one more example of how beautifully everything seems to be working out for us all at Hamilton," she said happily. "During our freshman year our lot was full of snags. One by one they have dropped away. Long before the Sans left college snobbishness was on the wane."

"Phil and Barbara deserve credit for much of that. I never saw a girl fight harder for democracy than Phil did during her freshie year. She really turned her class inside out and made them over." Marjorie's admiration for staunch, independent Phyllis Moore had steadily grown with time.

"I hear Miss Walbert is at Wayland Hall." Mention of Phil's energetic stand during her freshman

year brought her unworthy opponent to Robin's thoughts. "Is she as hateful as ever? I never could endure her, and you know, Marvelous Manager, I am fairly good-natured. Phil had an awful time over the way she tried to run the freshies."

"Your disposition couldn't be improved upon," laughed Marjorie. "Yes, she is at the Hall. I seldom see her except at a distance. She isn't there much to meals."

"She has a new car; a limousine. It is black, this time. I have seen here driving it or rather driving 'at it.' Someone, I forgot who, said Leslie Cairns was visiting an aunt in Hamilton."

Marjorie showed no surprise. She had already heard of Leslie's reappearance. Robin did not continue on the subject of Leslie. Her observation had been impersonal. Shortly afterward she left Robin, the two having agreed to call at the real estate agent's office on Wednesday of the coming week.

Recounting to Jerry the talk between Robin and herself, Jerry asked abruptly: "Have you girls told anyone you were going to try to get hold of those properties? That is, anyone outside our own crowd?"

"I can't say it has been kept a secret," Marjorie returned. "At the time of the show we gave last winter, some of the girls who helped a good deal, like Ethel Laird and Grace Dearborn, may have

mentioned it. For instance, Grace sold tickets all over the campus. We were talking at that time about how fine it would be to be able to found a dormitory. Nothing has been said of late outside our crowd, that I recall. Robin and I have only started the ball rolling again. Why did you ask, Jeremiah?"

"I was thinking. If the real estate agent happened to hear you wanted the properties he might raise the price of them to more than they were worth. You don't care to be stung, do you?"

"Certainly *not*. The less we have to pay for the site the more money we shall have to put into the building. Besides, we don't care to be saddled with any larger debt than we can help. We are going to see him next Wednesday. The chances are he won't have heard anything about it in that short space of time—unless he heard last spring." Marjorie frowned brief anxiety. Then her face cleared. "Oh, it isn't at all likely," she said. "Robin and I are going to put every minute we can spare into the work. Thank goodness, we studied hard enough our first three years! We are sure of getting through this year without having to dig."

"We've had loads of good times, but still we have kept up in all our subjects," commented Jerry with pardonable pride. "Now, in my sage and profound seniorship I propose to turn philanthropist and

promoter with you, Marvelous Manager. By the way, I brought up your mail. It's over there." Jerry indicated a small pile of letters on the top of a two-shelved wall book-case.

"Thank you." Marjorie made a dive for them. "Six; I am lucky today!" She hastily sat down in the nearest chair to enjoy them. Reading each as she opened it, she was slow in coming to the last one of the pile.

"Here's a note from Professor Leonard!" she exclaimed, mystification written on her pretty features. "He asks me to come to the gymnasium at four-thirty tomorrow afternoon. He doesn't say anything in the note but that."

"Basket ball, of course," guessed Jerry.

"But I didn't play on the team last year and he knows it. Oh, I think I know. Maybe he would like me to umpire or referee a game. No, it can't be that, for he dropped basket ball after the Sans made so much trouble. I am sure I can't guess why he wants to see me."

"You'll know after you've seen him," returned Jerry, snickering.

"I have an idea I shall," retorted Marjorie. "That was a brilliant remark, Jeremiah."

When at four-thirty on the following afternoon Marjorie sought the physical culture director in the

gymnasium, she was somewhat taken aback by the concise request: "I would like to make you chairman of the senior sports committee, Miss Dean. I have been urged to resume charge of college sports by President Matthews. You may recall *why* I refused to act as the director of them two years ago. Well, things have changed here since then. A certain pernicious element has been removed. I am going to try again, simply to please the doctor. Will you help me? I have in mind for that committee, you as chairman, Miss Page, Miss Harding and Miss Hunter. The four of you can arrange a series of basket ball games. In the spring we will have tennis. Miss Hunter is an expert player. I want her chiefly on account of her tennis prowess. It will not take up much of your time. You would probably attend the games held here, at any rate. Think it over and let me know by tomorrow. I wish to make a start as soon as possible."

Marjorie listened to the director in silent consternation. She did not wish to serve on any such committee. It would interfere, to some extent, in her new plans. On the other hand, she wished very much to help Professor Leonard. He had made a concession in again resuming directorship of college sports. Could she do less than aid him? She aspired to serve her Alma Mater in the best way. Perhaps this work was as important as building a

dormitory. Professor Leonard had said, "Think it over." Marjorie had already decided.

"I won't wait until tomorrow, Professor Leonard, to decide. I will accept the honor now. If you wish, I will see the other girls. I think you can count on them."

"Thank you, Miss Dean. I was sure you wouldn't fail me." The professor's hand went out impulsively.

Marjorie reflected with a twinge of remorse as she returned the handshake that she had come very near to failing him.

"You will help me greatly by seeing your friends. I wish you four would meet me here day after tomorrow at this time. We will then discuss our plans for the season."

"I'll simply have to make room for committee duties on my programme somehow," she thought, as she left the gymnasium and cut across the campus, headed for Silverton Hall. "Robin is in as deeply as I. Still, I know she wouldn't have refused, under the same circumstances. If I had dreamed, ever since my freshman year, of such an honor, I'd never have attained it. Just because I have about twice as much on hand as I can look after, along comes something else. It's what I should call an embarrassment of riches."

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE CREST OF HOPE

WHILE Marjorie was sighing a little over the multiplicity of responsibilities which had fallen to her lot, Elizabeth Walbert was also a person with several irons in the fire. She had promised Leslie Cairns that she would glean valuable information concerning the students' beneficiary fund. She had sworn to be even with Augusta Forbes. She had determined to keep in favor with Alida Burton and Lola Elster.

Leslie being by far the most important person on her horizon, Elizabeth strained a point to gather the information Leslie desired. The day after her talk with the ex-student she set out for Acasia House the moment classes were over for the day. Marian Foster, the freshman she had mentioned, was not unlike Elizabeth in disposition. She was an arrant social climber and ranked money and lavish expediture of it above everything. Introduced to Elizabeth on the campus, by another freshman, she had treated the junior with marked respect.

This had pleased Elizabeth, who had grown more unpopular at Hamilton with each year she returned. She had promptly singled out Marian as an object of her patronizing attentions. These had consisted in a luncheon or two. several drives and one dinner at the Colonial.

Ethel Laird, in her sweet, gracious fashion, had also been kind to Marian, who had been very lonely on first arrival at Acasia House. Thus she stood between two influences. She had been shrewd enough to hide her true character from Ethel, whose popularity as a senior she had quickly discovered. Privately she decided to play two parts. To Ethel she would be merely the friendly, appreciative freshie. It was Elizabeth's favor she really desired.

On this particular afternoon she welcomed Elizabeth with delight. She was even more pleased when the latter proposed a ride and a dinner at the Lotus. The invitation, which she quickly accepted, put her in a beatific state of mind which bred confidence. She was therefore very willing, as the new car, not the blue and buff "ice wagon," bowled along the wide highway, to chatter of affairs at Acasia House. Long before the ride was over and the two girls anchored at the Lotus, Elizabeth had heard that which brought a triumphant light to her insincere blue eyes.

"And you say you heard this yourself?" Elizabeth suavely questioned. "You are sure that is true about that dormitory rumor? So many stories start on the campus that aren't true at all. A girl will start what she calls a "blind alley" sometimes, just to tease the freshies. They will grow awfully excited over it. Then the laugh is on them."

"This wasn't a rumor," protested Marian. "It was gospel truth. I was in Miss Laird's room when these two seniors came to see her. I wouldn't have stayed after they came, but she seemed to wish me to. They asked her to attend a meeting at Wayland Hall. Then they talked about hoping they could buy this property where the boarding houses stand. It was so interesting to hear them. Miss Dean is beautiful, isn't she? Miss Page is awfully cute, too."

"I don't know either of them," evaded Elizabeth. "I have heard they were clever in a diggy way. Do tell me more of what they said. I am interested in this dormitory idea. I shall contribute five hundred dollars at least, maybe more, to help build it. It won't mean that much to me." She snapped her fingers grandly. She flattered herself into believing that Leslie could not have acted more cleverly.

As Marian was limited to twenty-five dollars a month spending money, Elizabeth's affluence impressed her deeply. She outdid herself in trying to

please the crafty junior. Nor could she guess that her every word was being stored up in Elizabeth's mind. Later, in the privacy of the junior's room, it would be transferred to paper. She would not be able to see Leslie for two or three days, so she resorted to notes, fearful lest she might forget a part of what she had heard.

On the same Wednesday on which Marjorie and Robin called at the office of Charles Cutler, the real estate agent, Elizabeth met Leslie Cairns at the Lotus. Neither pair crossed each other's paths. The information Elizabeth gave Leslie caused her to laugh often in her silent hob-goblin fashion. Elizabeth marked this with a little uneasiness.

"Why does what I am telling you strike you as so funny, Leslie," she inquired suspiciously.

"Because it does," was Leslie's cool response. "I can just imagine those infants taking a job like that boarding house proposition on their shoulders. I am willing to contribute to it, but I am afraid they will fall down on it. That's all."

Marjorie and Robin, however, were floating on the top wave of hope as they talked with the agent, a tall, spare man with honest blue eyes and gentle manners.

"I do not know what the owner of these properties wants for them," he said. "Five years ago he offered them for twenty-eight thousand dollars.

There are seven houses in the block which you girls wish to buy. That was at the rate of four thousand apiece. Real estate has increased in value since then, but not much in this section. He might ask thirty-five thousand, but not more than that. You could sell the houses for old lumber. They would have to be torn down. That would net you something. It would be a relief to see the last of them. I always thought that whole row so unsightly in contrast to the beauty of the campus. Pity the others will have to stand. If you will call one week from today I can let you know the owner's price. I expect him here within a few days."

"Isn't that great news?" exulted Robin, when they had left the office. "Thirty-five thousand is five thousand less than we figured. But, oh, my goodness, what a job we have undertaken! If we buy those properties, not a thing can be done about tearing them down until college closes. The off-the-campus girls must have a place to live. Then there's next fall to think of. The dormitory wouldn't be built so soon. It will take all summer to tear down the houses."

" 'Sufficient unto the day'," quoted Marjorie optimistically. "We will have to solve all those problems as we come to them. We could arrange for places for such students as couldn't find accommodations in the campus houses to live in the town of

Hamilton. We would have to make arrangements then with the jitney men to carry them back and forth, morning and night. There would have to be a luncheon provided for them near the campus. Signor Baretti might do that at a special price. This is only tentative. Still it shows that where there's a will there's a way."

"You deserve your name of Marvelous Manager. Jerry made no mistake when she gave it to you," declared Robin admiringly. "Honestly, Marjorie, I can't tell you when I have felt so happy! It is so wonderful, this plan of ours! I was half afraid that Mr. Cutler would say, first thing, 'No, the owner doesn't care to sell.' Now we are fairly sure of getting what we want. The minute we hear we can have it, I am going to give a party in my room to the Ninteteen Travelers. A year ago I would have given it at Baretti's. Not now. I have to practice economy. I'm a promoter of large enterprises."

CHAPTER XIV

WARY FISH

FOLLOWING on the heels of exultation, however, came disappointment. On the day before that set for their call at Mr. Cutler's office, Marjorie received a line from him stating that the owner of the properties was in Chicago and would not return until after Thanksgiving. Immediately he returned, she would be apprised of the fact.

"There's no use in being disappointed about it," she said bravely to Jerry. "We have the first chance to buy the properties. I shall not think much about it until nearer the time. The freshies are going to play their first game against the sophs one week from Saturday. I may as well turn my attention to my committee duties. Ahem!"

"You are a person of some importance, aren't you?" Jerry struck an attitude before Marjorie of mock respect. "Who's going to win, freshies or sophs?"

"Freshies, I believe. *L'enfant terrible* is a fine player. She is so clever. For a girl of her height

and weight she moves like lightning. One might think she was rough to watch her. She isn't. She plays a close game, but a clean one. Those two freshmen who go around with Miss Walbert are good players, too. I am glad Miss Forbes was picked for center. She is a fine girl, Jerry, even though she doesn't like me," Marjorie praised with a tolerant smile.

"She is not so worse," Jerry reluctantly conceded. "I don't mind her turning up her already turned-up nose at me. I am not stuck on myself. I object to her not appreciating you."

"So long as I have the fond regard of Jeremiah I can stand a few cold breezes." Marjorie reached across the width of the table and administered a fond pat to Jerry's plump hand.

"There's worse'n me, lady," croaked Jerry in her tramp voice, which made them both laugh.

It having been decided by the Nineteen Travelers not to undertake the giving of an entertainment until after Thanksgiving, Marjorie had a fair amount of time to give to basket ball. Professor Leonard had asked her and her three assistants on committee to drop in at the gymnasium occasionally during practice. "It will give you a line on the teams. I am anxious for fair play and no favors. I want the morale of these teams kept up. I recall a time when it was sadly lacking."

The instructor was brutally candid in referring to the underhanded methods of the departed Sans. He would never get over his utter loathing for their lack of principle.

As for Augusta Forbes, energetic center on her team, her unreasoning dislike for Marjorie and Jerry had not abated. She was greatly displeased to find Marjorie at the head of the sports committee. She talked loudly in the privacy of her room about not expecting a square deal from the "wonderful" committee. She attributed her position on the freshman team entirely to Professor Leonard's superior judgment. As a matter of fact, the committee had had the deciding word. Contrary to usual custom, the players received notices of their election to the teams the following day instead of on the floor. This gave the director and his committee an opportunity to talk matters over before deciding.

Unlike the rest of her Bertram chums, Gussie had put in a more or less stormy fall on the campus. She was not specially tactful and often gave unnecessary offense. She had a habit of blurting out the truth regardless of whose feelings might suffer. Yet she was quick to praise when something pleased her, and generous to a fault.

Unfortunately, she had made the one mistake of briefly cultivating Elizabeth Walbert. The after

effects of that mistake still lingered to disturb her peace of mind. In keeping with her spiteful resolve, Elizabeth had not lost an opportunity to ridicule or annoy Gussie. Her influence among the half dozen freshmen at the Hall with whom she consorted was great enough to incite them to mischief against tall, babyish Gussie.

One evening she returned from dinner to find all her framed pictures turned toward the wall, her bed dismantled, the sheets and covers tied in hard knots, her text books lodged in the wastebasket. Another rainy evening she returned from the dining room to open windows. The rain was beating in the room and no amount of pressure would close them. Wrathful examination discovered nails as the opposing force—cleverly driven in the sashes so as almost to escape notice. On still another occasion, she was decidedly startled to come upon a masked, black-garbed figure stretched on her couch bed. It turned out to be a dummy made of her clothing and attired in an old black domino; one of the very dominos worn by the Sans on the night they had hazed Marjorie. Elizabeth Walbert had found it tucked away on a top closet shelf of her room, where it had escaped the notice of the maid during the summer house cleaning.

Such practical jokes, to Elizabeth's mind, amounted to nothing. She yearned to do something

really malicious. Ridicule of Gussie appeared to do her little damage. What the "baby elephant" needed was a good scare. With this in mind, she sought the help of Lola Elster and Alida Burton. Gussie had scoffed openly at Lola's mannish attire and bold manner. She had been treated by both seniors with a haughty disdain which she deeply resented. Therefore she had not hesitated to express to other freshmen a frankly unflattering opinion of Lola and Alida. During her brief stretch of friendship with Elizabeth, Gussie had repeated it to the junior.

It was on a rainy evening in late October that Elizabeth laid her grievance before the two seniors. She had hardly stepped over their threshold when she burst forth with: "I came to have a talk with you about that horrid Miss Forbes. I won't endure any more insults from her. Will you two help me teach her a lesson?"

"How?" inquired Alida, laying down her text book and staring interestedly.

"That's what I must think out. She has said rude, cutting things about all of us. This afternoon I met her and a gang of girls coming across the campus. The minute she spied me she said something to the rest of them. The whole crowd turned and walked away around me; just as though they couldn't bear to come near me, even in passing. I

felt *so* humiliated. That is only a very small item compared to some of the hateful things she has said about me. And why? Simply because I didn't stay near her every minute at the frolic."

"Yes, Bess; we have heard all that lingo before," Lola said with a touch of insolent indifference. "We know your trials with the 'baby elephant.' What do you expect us to do about it? *We* simply ignore her. You do the same and she will let you alone."

"I'll do more than that. I think," Elizabeth lowered her voice, "she ought to be hazed."

"No *sir-ee!*" Lola's lips set tightly after the totally disapproving ejaculation. "Don't you ever mention hazing in this room. You must be crazy. Why were the Sans expelled? For hazing Miss Dean. You know that. Do you imagine for a second that Alida and I, in our *senior year,* would take the chances Les Cairns did?"

"I wouldn't haze *anyone,*" declared Alida emphatically.

"Wise child; neither would I." Lola fixed half scornful eyes on Elizabeth. "What ever made you light upon such a foolhardy idea? Where and how would you haze her?"

"I don't know yet what I would do," pouted Elizabeth. "There are lots of ways of hazing a person. The girls have done a few little things to her

room, as it is. Nothing was said to them about it." She related with relish the tricks that had been played on Gussie.

"All that's *hazing*," flatly maintained Lola. "This freshie must be pretty white or she would have reported it to Remson. You say nothing's been said. That means she can keep her affairs to herself."

"Hm-m!" Elizabeth made a pettish gesture. "You are queer. One minute you talk against this hateful creature, the next you praise her. It's a clear case of blow hot, blow cold with you, Lola."

"If you don't like my ways, you had best stay away from me." Lola half closed her eyes. Her expression was one of utter boredom.

Elizabeth made no answer to this. She was not ready to stay away from Lola.

"Let me tell you something, Bess." Alida now took the floor, shaking a warning finger at their caller. "Don't come to us with any scheme for getting even with someone you don't like. We are not going in for revenge this season. If a really clever scout like Leslie Cairns couldn't get away with it, neither you nor I could. That is certain."

"Oh, I don't know. I can't say I think Leslie was so very clever. She bore the reputation of being a wonder worker, but she made plenty of flivvers. I could have engineered that hazing of Miss

Dean and carried it through successfully. She made an awful mess of it."

"I never heard the rights of that affair, so I can't pass opinion on what you just said." Lola's tones were dry to displeasure. She knew enough concerning their caller's proclivity toward malicious gossiping to weigh well her words. "I prefer to drop the subject entirely, Bess. It does not interest me. Get it straight, once and for all, Alida and I know when we are well off. We aren't contemplating any changes in our programme, least of all foolish changes."

"Very well." The reply bristled with offended vanity. It was gall to the conscienceless junior to be thus baldly snubbed. "You girls are *very* magnanimous. Perhaps you haven't heard much that Miss Forbes has said against both of you. I assure you it has been *considerable.*"

"Let her rave." Lola shrewdly ignored the bait thrown out by Elizabeth.

"How does it happen that you always hear more of such gossip than any other girl on the campus whom we know?" demanded Alida a trifle sharply.

"I don't." The red poured into Elizabeth's cheeks at this thrust. "You two stick together all the time. That's why you are not in touch with campus gossip, as you call it."

"I see as much of this lovely aggregation as I care to," Lola yawned. "Forget it, Bess. You can't stir us into action with that kind of bluff. You are looking for trouble. You thought it would be nice to have us help you hunt it. Nay, nay, my child! It simply isn't being done in our circle."

"I might have known better than come to you. I——"

"First sensible thing you've said since you came in here," murmured Lola.

"You are simply *hateful,* Lola Elster! Good night!" Elizabeth rose with an angry flop and made for the door.

"Oh, good night," called Lola tantalizingly after her, as she banged the door. Lola turned to Alida, laughing. "That settles her. How she does hate to have her bluff called! Little she cares what that Forbes kid says against us. She only thinks of herself. If we were silly enough to help her in her schemes, we'd get the worst of it in the long run. If trouble came she'd slide from under and leave us to bear the brunt of it."

"Don't I know it?" nodded Alida. "Bess is good company when she chooses to be, but I never feel that she can be trusted. If I had mentioned to her tonight that I did not like Miss Forbes, I'd probably hear next week that I had said she was a vil-

lain of the deepest dye and that I was going to have her expelled from Hamilton. Bess weaves a whole hut from one wisp of straw."

"I decline to furnish a single wisp, then," Lola said lightly. "Bess is riding to a fall. I propose to be so far away from her when it happens that I won't hear the crash."

CHAPTER XV

INTERNAL WAR

MARJORIE thought that she had never longed so much for a holiday to come as Thanksgiving. She was eager to go home and see her general and captain. Then there was Connie's wedding to be considered. Her mother had written her that the gown she was to wear as maid of honor to Constance was ready and waiting for her. Marjorie did not know its color, texture, what kind of wedding Connie was to have as to color scheme. All of that was being kept away from her as a delightful secret. Naturally she had a lively yearning for home and its joyous surprises.

There was also the question of the boarding-house proposition which could not be answered until after Thanksgiving. She hoped the owner would not disappoint her and Robin again by remaining away from Hamilton.

She made a valiant effort to forget her own yearnings in taking a kindly interest in basket ball

practice, which went on almost every afternoon in the gymnasium. She soon found that the scrub and official sophomore teams welcomed her presence at practice. The freshman team did not. Gussie Forbes glowered rudely at her whenever she chanced to be near enough. The two freshmen forwards, friends of Elizabeth Walbert's, showed disfavor of Marjorie's attendance. The other two freshman players took color, chameleon-like, from the belligerent trio and cast indifferently unfriendly glances in her direction.

It did not take Marjorie long to fathom this state of affairs. While it amused her, she was mildly resentful of it. Resolved not to be intimidated by a few black looks, she calmly ignored the situation. Soon, however, she began to notice that internal war raged on that particular team. As center, Augusta Forbes had not struck a bed of roses. With four of her team-mates arrayed against her, her position had become well-nigh unbearable.

Her childish heart wrapped up in basket ball, she exhibited a noteworthy patience. She was keenly proud of her position on the team and worked with might and main, schooling herself to be indifferent to the contemptible little stings delivered by her team-mates. Considering her tempestuous disposition, she showed remarkable self-restraint, an indi-

cation of the fine young woman she would become when college had worn away the rough edges.

"See here, Marvelous Manager," Jerry began one afternoon as the two stood watching a bit of snappy playing, which Augusta had just exhibited. *"L'enfant terrible* is not getting a fair deal. Did you know that?"

"Yes, *I know it,"* replied Marjorie with savage emphasis. "It is too bad. Something will have to be done about it. I have noticed it before today. I wanted to see if the rest of the committee would. I wished to be sure that I wasn't over critical. Muriel mentioned it to me last week. Robin and Elaine noticed that the team was at loggerheads on Tuesday. I hardly know how to proceed. I hate to call a meeting of the team and lay down the law to them. It will only make Miss Forbes' position more uncomfortable, I am afraid. She plays with her whole heart. They keep one eye on their game and the other on her."

"She's a star player," praised Jerry. "I can't help but admire her for the way she plugs along under such stress." "Yes, Marj, *l'enfant terrible* will turn out well, I predict, even if she never learns to appreciate us."

"It seems to be Marj's duty to wind up this snarl," commented Marjorie satirically. "I do not

relish the task. I wish the freshies would not jangle. The soph team is positively seraphic."

While Marjorie was casting about in her fertile brain for a good opening toward adjusting matters on the freshman team, the way opened with amazing celerity. She had attended practice on Thursday. The following Monday she had not. It being a rainy afternoon there were almost no spectators. An altercation rose between a girl on the scrub team which the freshies were pitted against, and Augusta. The scrub player claimed a foul on Gussie which the latter hotly contested. Gussie's team-mates stood up for the scrub. The end of her patience reached, she turned on them all in a fury of words, stinging and truthful.

"The whole trouble with you four girls is you want to see me off the team," she concluded. "Sorry I can't oblige you, I mean glad. I play fairly. But you say, I do not. In your hearts you know I do. You had best tend to your own playing instead of picking flaws with me. I play a better game than any of you. If we lose the first game of the season, it won't be my fault."

"Nothing conceited about you, is there?" sneered Alma Hurst, the most disagreeable of the four objectors.

"I know what I can do on the floor," composedly retorted Gussie.

"Yes, and I know what I can do off the floor," threatened Alma. "We would have a fine team if it weren't for you. It's a case of four against one. I think our word will stand. I shall see that it does."

"Go as far as you like," scornfully dared Gussie. "You can't bother me."

"We'll see about that," asserted Alma, and walked away, accompanied by her three irate supporters.

Gussie left the gymnasium that afternoon with a heavy heart. She had defied the quartette of oppressors, but she had no faith in herself.

"I suppose I'm done for," she reflected gloomily, as she forged through a driving rain to Wayland Hall. "They will complain to the sports committee or to Professor Leonard. Those seniors on the sports committee hate me. They will be perfectly delighted to put me off the team. They will make Professor Leonard think I am the most hateful, cheating person on the campus and he will ask me to resign. Just as though I would cheat in basket ball. There'd be no fun in playing unfairly. Gussie choked back a low sob. She dashed her hand angrily across her eyes. I won't cry. I'm not such a big baby as that, I hope."

On the following afternoon Marjorie found a note, in the bulletin board at the Hall, which

brought a quick light of anger to her brown eyes. It read:

Miss Marjorie Dean,
Chairman, Sports Committee,
Wayland Hall, Campus.

DEAR MISS DEAN:

We appeal to you to take prompt action in the case of Miss Augusta Forbes who is a detriment to the freshman team. She is rough and unfair in her playing. Besides, she has accused us of being untruthful and used what we should call harsh language to us. We try to work peacefully and in harmony, but she is so unruly we simply cannot endure her. As there are four of us, all of the same opinion, I think our plea should be heard and this disturber removed from the team. Let us hear from you in the way of justice.

Yours truly,
ALMA HURST,
Official Freshman Team.

"They'll certainly hear from me," Marjorie commented, a smile flickering about the corners of her mouth. "As for *l'enfant terrible*. Poor old child!"

She sat down on the top step of the landing, where she had so often paused to read her letters, and re-read the pre-emptory letter. She continued

to sit there for a little while, evidently turning over in her mind something that had more than once visited it.

Unable to decide, she rose and went on up the stairs. Stopping only to lay her notebooks on the center table of her room, she next sought Muriel.

"Read that." She dropped the letter on the table before which Muriel sat writing industriously.

Muriel glanced through and gave a short, scornful laugh. "Nothing like asking for what one wants. Such a modest request! Strip the team of its shining light to please four sore-heads! What are you going to say to the big four?"

"Enough in a few words to let them understand that I understand them. I needed your official support. I see I have it. I knew I had already. Now I shall show this effusion to Robin and Elaine. I am going over to Silverton Hall. If Jerry comes here hunting me, tell her I'll be back in time for dinner."

"All right. Be sure to write those snippies a good, stiff letter, and let me see it," called Muriel after Marjorie as she went out the door.

Robin and Elaine were equally disapproving of the letter written by Miss Hurst.

"I think Miss Forbes should be told of this attempt to oust her from the team. Of course she must have known all along of their feeling against

her. That accounts for the lack of fellowship among them that I noticed last Tuesday. It is not fair to keep her in the dark about it," Robin declared.

"I had thought of telling her," Marjorie said slowly. "I could write these kickers the kind of letter they need. They would then either have to treat Miss Forbes well or I should ask for their resignations from the team. They are in the wrong, I am sure. I will not countenance any injustice to any player while I am chairman of the sports committee. I feel, however, that I ought to ask Miss Forbes for her side of the matter in fairness to them. They have stated their case against her."

"So you should," Robin was quick to agree.

"Oh, by all means, tell her, Marjorie," advocated gentle Elaine. "Then she will be sure that we are standing up for her."

This was good advice. Unfortunately, neither Robin nor Elaine knew of Gussie's unreasonable attitude toward Marjorie. She considered this phase of the affair rather ruefully as she walked across the campus through the November dusk. Her best method of approaching Gussie was to go to her room. Then if the recalcitrant "Gus" refused to talk with her, no one other than Florence Hart, Gussie's room-mate, would be present at the failure.

"I'll have to go and see Miss Forbes," Marjorie

informed Jerry with a sigh. Jerry had been allowed to read the annoying letter.

"How nice!" satirized Jerry. "You had better poke your head in at her door, say what you must and beat it back here in a hurry. You will be perfectly safe, at least, if you follow my advice."

Marjorie pictured this move on her part and giggled. "I think I'll go and see her now. I have just time enough before dinner. If I put it off it will be harder and harder to do. I don't wish to go one single bit, Jeremiah." Her laughing face suddenly sobered.

"I don't blame you. Still, it may all turn out for the best. Perhaps if this big goose understands that you are trying to help her she will change her policy. Glad I'm not on that sports committee. I have all I can do to manage Jerry Jeremiah Geraldine Macy, let alone managing anyone else."

CHAPTER XVI

ADMINISTRATING JUSTICE

MARJORIE started down the hall on her difficult errand, wondering what to say first to Gussie Forbes. She hoped Miss Hart would answer the door. Were Gussie to do so she might easily close the door in her caller's face. Having something of importance to say, Marjorie was anxious to say it and close the subject.

She knocked twice before an answer came. When the door opened, she found herself looking into the frowning face of *l'enfant terrible.* Before Gussie could close the door, had she intended to do so, Marjorie spoke with pretty impulsiveness.

"May I come in for a few moments, Miss Forbes? I wish particularly to see you."

For answer Gussie merely opened the door wider and stood aside for Marjorie to pass her. She thought she understood the nature of the call. Miss Dean had come to tell her she was no longer a member of the freshman team. Well, she was not

afraid to face this senior who had made fun of her on sight.

"Will you have a chair?" she said formally, closing the door and coming forward until she stood directly in front of her caller.

"Thank you." Marjorie sat down, her brown eyes fixed on her reserved hostess. There was a world of kindness in their beautiful depths which Gussie could not overlook. She reluctantly sprang to the conclusion: "She's sorry for me. She wants to let me down easily."

"I have brought with me a letter, Miss Forbes. I should like you to read it. It displeased the sports committee very much. I beg of you not to take it to heart. It is not worth one minute's discomfort on your part."

Gussie accepted the letter in wonder. This explanation of Marjorie's did not tally with what she had expected the senior would say. A bright flush mantled her cheeks as she read it.

"They threatened to do this," she said dully as she returned the letter to Marjorie. "I play basket ball fairly. I am not rough, either. I had a fuss with a girl on the scrub team yesterday. The rest of our team stood up for her instead of me. I would have resigned before this, only I like to play basket ball. I saw no reason why I should give up my position."

"There is no reason why you should not play," warmly returned Marjorie. No one could play a fairer game than you. Our committee have watched and admired your playing. All four of us used to play on the college teams. So we know a star player when we see one. Only lately we all saw that you were not being fairly treated. We had decided to put an end to such unfairness when I received this letter. I have seen the others on the sports committee. They are of the same mind as myself. We shall see that justice is done you."

Augusta's face had begun to clear as Marjorie talked. It brightened with each succeeding word. She forgot her earlier grudge against the other girl. She was hearing herself appreciated and it was very sweet to her.

"If these four players on the freshman team," Marjorie continued, "refuse to be amicable on the floor, the sports committee will demand *their* resignations. We have the authority to do so and shall use it if necessary. It is our aim to have only pleasantness in connection with basket ball. Friendly rivalry between teams and harmony among the members of each team. That is the only basis on which to conduct college sports. I have seen it tried the other way, and it doesn't pay."

"If they resigned, then there wouldn't be any

freshman team," stammered Gussie, thinking instantly of this dire calamity.

"Oh, yes there would," Marjorie assured with a friendly laugh. "You would be center on a new team. Your position on the freshman team is safe. Please understand that, Miss Forbes. The other freshmen may find theirs shaky."

Gussie stared at Marjorie with wide, solemn eyes. "I did not know you were like this," she blurted. "What was the matter with me that I misjudged you so? I thought you and Miss Macy made fun of me on the first evening we were at Hamilton."

"Miss Macy made some funny remarks about the noise you were all making and about you being freshies," Marjorie felt impelled to confess, but she did not intend to be ill-natured. We laughed, because, Jeremiah, as we call her, is almost always funny."

"You will never forgive me," was Gussie's shamefaced prognostication. "The girls told me I had made a mistake. I wouldn't listen to them. I don't deserve your kindness to me, Miss Dean. When Miss Hurst said she was going to have me dropped from the team, I thought you would be glad of an excuse to drop me. So you can see for yourself what a horrid, suspicious person I am."

For answer Marjorie laughed merrily. "I think you are very honest and straightforward," she dif-

fered. "I am not sorry this letter was written. It has brought us an understanding of each other which should lead to friendship. If I were in your place, Miss Forbes, I would go on working on the team precisely as though nothing had happened. I shall write Miss Hurst this evening. I imagine after she receives my letter she will stop this annoying persecution. That is what it amounts to."

After a little further conversation with the now placated Gussie, Marjorie shook hands with her and left her in a beatified state of mind.

"There is nothing truer than that old proverb, 'It's an ill wind that blows no one good,' " was Marjorie's salutation as she entered her room. "By rights I should send Miss Hurst a note of thanks for putting me on good terms with Miss Forbes."

Marjorie's gay utterance was indicative of the success of her errand. She was genuinely happy over the change in Augusta Forbes toward herself. Had Gussie been one of whom her upright mind could not truly approve, she would not have been annoyed at the freshman's misunderstanding of her. Knowing the stubborn girl to be sterling at heart, it had hurt Marjorie to be thus misjudged. It had hurt her still more to know that Augusta saw Jerry in a false light.

"I notice you weren't extinguished," commented

Jerry, her eyes resting with fond humor upon her pretty chum. "Tell me about it."

Marjorie complied with the request. She finished with: "I explained a little about that night we saw her at Baretti's; assured her we weren't making fun of her. I asked her to come and see us soon. She said she would. She will know, after she has talked with you about five minutes, Jeremiah, that you are the best old treasure that ever was."

"Am I so wonderful as all that? Dear me!" Jerry simpered, raising her chubby hands in mock surprise.

"Yes, you are, and you know it." Marjorie made an affectionate little rush at Jerry and caught her around the waist. In the absence of Captain and General, she sometimes treated Jerry to these sudden, playful proofs of her affection. Nothing pleased Jerry more.

"I won't have time to write an answer to Miss Hurst's note," she said, glancing at the clock. "I'll do it directly after dinner and mail it before eight-thirty. There is a mail collection at nine. I want it to reach her tomorow morning. I shall attend practice tomorrow afternoon and see that Miss Forbes has fair play." The determined glint in Marjorie's eyes spelled justice to the injured party.

Marjorie did not linger at the dinner table that evening. She hastened upstairs the moment she

had eaten dessert and set to work at the letter. Her fountain pen poised thoughtfully over the paper, she considered Miss Hurst's note for a brief season. Then she wrote:

"Dear Miss Hurst:

"Your letter received. In justice to Miss Forbes I would say that her case has been under observation of the sports committee for the past week. The findings are these—she is a fine and honorable player, conforming to the rules of basket ball in every respect. She is not a disturber, in any sense, and the sports committee must refuse to countenance unfair reports against her. I find her scrupulously truthful. The committee have not been pleased with the churlish treatment which has been accorded Miss Forbes by the other members of the team. We would advocate a marked change on the part of yourself and your team-mates in this direction. Personal spite makes poor team work.

"Yours sincerely,

"Marjorie Dean,
Chairman Sports Committee."

"There!" she exclaimed, as she addressed an envelope to Alma Hurst at Acasia House. "That unpleasant labor is out of the way."

"Let me read it?" begged Jerry. "You need my official criticism."

"Read it, then. You don't allow me to have any secrets from you," Marjorie complained in feigned vexation.

"No indeed," emphasized Jerry. "Good work," she approved, having read the letter. "The real straight-from-the-shoulder variety. That ought to give pause to the Amalgamated Sorehead Society. That's a fine name for them. I shall tell it to Gloomy Gus when she and I grow to be bosom friends."

"Better not," warned Marjorie, breaking into laughter. "She is quite capable of hurling it at them in a moment of wrath. Don't furnish her with ammunition. She is a handful, all by herself."

Drawing on her fur coat, for the evening was snappy with frost, Marjorie went bare-headed out of the Hall and across the campus, diagonally to the nearest mail-box. About to cross the main drive on the return to the house, she stood aside for a passing car. The glare of an arc light over the drive picked out plainly the faces of the two occupants of the car. They did not note her, she being in the shadow.

"Oh-h!" a soft little breath of surprise escaped her. She remained in the shadow watching the car. It stopped in front of Wayland Hall. One of

the occupants, Elizabeth Walbert, left the car and hurried up the steps of the Hall. The car turned in the open space before the house, darted away instantly. It shot past Marjorie at high speed. This time she hardly glimpsed the driver's face. She had already recognized it, however, as that of Leslie Cairns. She had not withdrawn into the shadow for the purpose of spying upon the two girls. She had merely preferred not to encounter them. She resolved to tell no one of having seen Leslie on the campus. She could not refrain from wondering at the ex-senior's temerity, in thus invading a territory now forbidden to her.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CULMINATION OF A ROMANCE

"It's a perfectly sweet dress! Of course it is just a wee, tiny bit better than any other you've ever given me, you two old dears!"

Marjorie made her usual loving onslaught upon her smiling general and captain who sat side by side on the living room davenport admiring her. It was the evening of Constance Stevens' wedding and Marjorie was proudly parading her maid of honor frock before her indulgent parents. She had just come down stairs and was bubbling over with happiness at the beauty of the gown, her flowers, and the prospect in general directly ahead of her.

"Right face. Forward march to the end of the room," ordered General Dean, gently holding Marjorie off from him. Your distinguished captain and I can't judge your fine feathers at such close range."

Marjorie obediently paraded the length of the room and back, a vision of youthful enchantment.

The pale yellow of her satin gown brought out vividly her dark hair and starry eyes. She had once given Connie a blue gown. This time Connie had been the donor. She had also insisted on furnishing even the white velvet evening coat, lined with the same satin as Marjorie's frock, along with the other accessories of the costume. It lay across a chair, waiting for its lovely wearer. On the center table reposed a huge cluster of yellow chrysanthemums, tied with pale satin ribbon.

"Break ranks. Time for the gallant army to move on." Mr. Dean consulted his watch.

"You didn't say what you thought of my frock," Marjorie reminded.

"I dare not. I have no desire to encourage vanity in my own child. Besides, soldiers don't wear frocks. They wear uniforms," teased Mr. Dean.

"Much obliged," Marjorie nodded saucy thanks. "I mean for the compliment. It was a compliment, even though obscure."

"You are so welcome," gushed Mr. Dean. "Let me offer the army my arms. He politely crooked his elbows to his wife and daughter.

Laughing. the two accepted his gallant offer, and the trio swept grandly from the living room.

"Captain deserves a whole lot of compliments," Marjorie declared as they walked down the drive

three abreast to the limousine. "She looks so beautiful tonight!"

"I had already observed that fact," returned her general, his eyes admiringly resting on his wife. Always a beautiful woman, Mrs. Dean was particularly distinctive in the white lace gown she was wearing. "You haven't complimented me yet," he pointedly added.

"You mustn't ask for praise. Just be nice and folks will praise you of their own accord," Marjorie gave his arm a vigorous pinch.

"I see!" He appeared to ponder. "Pretty is as pretty does. I suppose that cruel pinch belongs with the advice."

"It does. Want another?"

"No, thank you. One more and I shall balk. Then who will see you to the wedding?"

In this frolicsome strain the Deans set out for Gray Gables to see the beautiful culmination of a romance begun with Marjorie's gift of a blue dress to a girl who had known little then of happiness.

As Constance had said to Marjorie, on the night of Jerry's and Hal's dance, only her near and dear ones were to be present at her marriage to Lawrence Armitage. This happy event was to take place at Gray Gables at eight o'clock that evening.

Due to the time of year, Constance had decided on a chrysanthemum wedding, these being her

foster father, Mr. Stevens', favorite flowers. Laurie held Mr. Stevens next to his own father in affection. He reverenced him as a master musician. Both he and Constance were glad to defer to his preference in this respect.

During the drive to Gray Gables, Marjorie found her mother's hand and held it. She was feeling rather emotional in a very quiet fashion. Connie's wedding was not yet quite a reality. Could it be that at eight o'clock that evening Connie was actually to be married? It seemed only yesterday that she and Constance were walking home from high school, grumbling over the length of next days' French lesson.

Her captain understanding her sudden change of mood asked no questions, simply passed her free arm about Marjorie's shoulders. Only the day before she had observed to her husband: "Here is our Constance on the eve of marriage. Marjorie is still nothing but a large child. Her ideas of love are very vague."

"I am glad of it," Mr. Dean had returned. "I hope her romance to come is still far distant."

Arrived at Gray Gables they found the large square reception hall and drawing room had been converted into a chrysanthemum bower. The clean fresh scent of chrysanthemums filled the air. At the foot of the wide staircase were two huge vases of

large, fringed, white mums. From this point a white ribboned aisle began which extended to one end of the drawing room, where an exquisite banking of palms and yellow and white mums marked the spot before which Constance and Laurie would stand to repeat their vows of deathless love and loyalty. Along each side of the ribboned way bloomed a hedge of golden and white mums of the small, bushy variety. The aisles reminded Marjorie of the chrysanthemum walk at Wayland Hall, designed by Brooke Hamilton.

"Go on up stairs, Marjorie," Miss Allison directed, after welcoming the Deans. "Constance looks so lovely. She is waiting anxiously for you."

Marjorie needed no second instructions. She ran up the stairs in her usual buoyant fashion and knocked at a familiar door.

"Come in." Constance rose from before her dressing table as Marjorie entered. The two met in the middle of the room and embraced. For a long moment they stood thus. In the eyes of each were tears which they both strove to check.

"I'm so happy, Marjorie, and sad, and my feelings are a general jumble," half sobbed Constance.

Marjorie nodded through tears. "I know. I feel that way, too, just because it's you. I don't want to cry and make my eyelids pink and neither do you," she added with a tremulous laugh.

This brought a smile to Constance's lovely but distinctly solemn features. The first rush of emotion past, the chums felt better.

"How dear you are in your wedding gown!" Marjorie exclaimed. She had now stepped far enough away from Constance to obtain a good view of her. The dress was of heavy white satin, beautiful in its simplicity of design. On a white-covered stand nearby lay the long fine lace veil with its perfumed garniture of lilies of the valley and orange blossoms. Beside it was the bride's bouquet, a shower of the same sweet lilies and orange blossoms.

"This is Laurie's gift to me." Constance touched tenderly a string of luscious pearls adorning her white throat. "I want you to help me adjust my veil. Aunt Susan's maid wished to, but I wouldn't let her. I preferred you to do it, Marjorie."

"I'd love to. You know that," Marjorie left off admiring the pearls to make this warm assurance. "Go and sit on your dressing-table chair. Then you can see me fix your veil and be sure that you are satisfied with it."

Constance obediently complied. Marjorie lightly lifted the fairy-like bridal insigna and placed it upon her friend's head.

"I am your fairy god-mother," she said in a dramatic voice. "On your wedding night I come to

bring you every known happiness. I place the chaplet of love upon your head and grant you a long, untroubled life."

Both girls laughed at this bit of fancy, the oval mirror reflecting a charming picture as Marjorie carefully adjusted the veil over Connie's golden curls.

Presently the floor clock in the room ticked off ten minutes to eight. Next Miss Allison entered with: "Are you ready, dear?"

"Yes, Auntie." Constance rose and held out both hands to the woman whose great-heartedness had changed the current of her whole life. "I wish I could thank you for all you've done for me, Aunt Susan," she said with wistful sincerity. "It is so beautiful to have this kind of wedding from the home you gave me and surrounded by my very best friends."

"Nonsense, child," declared Miss Allison with gentle energy. "Think of all you have given me to make me happy. Though I shall miss you more when you are in Europe, simply because you are farther away, I feel this to be a particularly wonderful ending of a Thanksgiving Day. Now I must leave you girls and go on down stairs. Be ready to descend on the first notes of the wedding march, Connie. Don't keep your bridegroom waiting." With this touch of humor she left them.

As Mr. Stevens, Uncle John Roland and little Charlie were detailed to give away the bride, Professor Harmon, Laurie's old friend at Weston High School, and three members of the Sanford orchestra formerly directed by Mr. Stevens, had been invited to play the wedding music.

With the first dulcet strains of Mendelssohn's immortal Wedding March, Constance began a slow descent of the staircase, followed by Marjorie. It seemed eminently fitting that Marjorie, who had so loyally stood by Constance through thick and thin, should now be making this short though momentous pilgrimage with her.

At the foot of the stairs, Laurie, looking handsomer than Marjorie had ever before seen him, awaited his bride. Hal, his boyhood friend, stood beside him. Marjorie flashed him a bright, friendly glance as the two of them fell in behind their chums and began the walk through the flowery aisle to the bank of chrysanthemums. There Mr. Armitage, Miss Allison, Uncle John, Mr. Stevens and Charlie awaited them. Laurie had wished matters thus arranged.

Gathered informally in the spacious room were the Lookouts of the original chapter, Miss Archer, Mr. La Salle, two or three Weston High School instructors whom Laurie had specially liked, a dozen or more of his high school comrades, two or three

friends of his father's, and his dead mother's only sister. These made up the wedding guests. As the last telling strains of the wedding march died into that impressive silence which always immediately precedes the bridal ceremony, the company moved forward and formed a wide, worshiping circle about the wedding party. Then the rector of the Sanford Episcopal Church began the fine, old Episcopalian ring service.

It was the first wedding in which Marjorie had taken a part more important than that of guest. Constance was also the first one of the Lookouts to be married. So thoroughly impressed was she with Constance and Laurie, she gave no special thought to Hal. He was wondering with might and main if Marjorie might possibly awaken to love as a result of the marriage of the best friend of each of them. Hal had learned his lesson, however, on the night of the dance he and Jerry had given. He had then understood definitely that Marjorie wished to keep far away from any sentiment for him deeper than friendship. He was resolved to keep to this plane, no matter how bitterly it grieved him. He would never give Marjorie up as his prospective wife until he heard from her own lips that she did not love him. Still, he would never again make the faintest approach toward sentiment unless he saw for himself that it was not distasteful to her. He

had set a hard task for himself. He was determined to carry it through. Boyishly, he told himself that if ever he asked Marjorie to marry him and she refused him, he would never marry.

The ceremony over, Constance was passed from one to another of her dear ones, while Laurie received the firm handclasps of his men friends. As the hands of Hal and Laurie met, their eyes exchanged glances. In Laurie's was untold sympathy. In Hal's was an expression which might have been either fortitude or proud resignation. Laurie could not judge which. He could only hope, as he had recently told Constance, that Marjorie would wake up some day to what a real prince old Hal was.

Solemnity, even momentary, could not long survive the unique presence of Charlie Stevens. Hardly had the first congratulations been extended when Charlie loudly expressed himself to Marjorie.

"I was going to marry you myself, Marj'rie, but I sha'n't. You're a good deal too tall and old to make me a nice wife," he pleasantly observed. "That's quite a pretty dress you've got on. Someone else, maybe someone as tall as Laurie or Hal might like to marry you—someday. I wouldn't. I like you, Marj'rie, 'bout the best of all, next to Connie and Mary Raymond, but I'd rather stay at home with Uncle John than get married."

"I think it is just as well you changed your mind, Charlie." Marjorie joined in the laughter at her expense. Her color had deepened a trifle at Charlie's hopeful prophecy that someone as tall as Hal might like to marry her some day.

"I think so, too," Charlie agreed importantly. "I may get married when I'm about a hundred. I'll be a good deal taller then. I and my wife will come to your house to see Delia and have her give us some choc'lit cake."

Well satisfied with this plan, he trotted off after his idol, Uncle John Roland, who could not look at Connie without tears. He had left the group gathered about the bridal couple until he was again able to control his emotions.

Laurie and Constance had elected to spend a week's honeymoon in the Armitages' New York home, which Laurie had been preparing for his bride for three months before their marriage. From there they would sail for Europe. They were to leave Sanford on the eleven o'clock express for New York.

Constance's last act before changing her wedding dress for travel attire was to throw her bouquet from the open staircase down among her girl friends. Muriel Harding captured it, thereby bringing down upon herself plenty of good-natured rail-

lery. Marjorie had tried with the others to catch the bouquet, as a matter of sport. She was secretly glad when it fled past her and almost into Muriel's hands. While she had taken the utmost interest in Connie's wedding, she did not wish to be reminded, even by a fragrant floral sign, that somewhere in the future lurked a wedding day for herself.

CHAPTER XVIII

BLACK DISAPPOINTMENT

Returned to Hamilton from the Thanksgiving holiday, the most important subject on Marjorie's horizon was that of the real estate transaction she and Robin Page hoped to close with Mr. Cutler. He had stated that the owner of the boarding house properties would be in Hamilton after Thanksgiving. Both she and Robin were impatient to hear from the agent, yet neither felt like forcing matters.

It was over a week after Thanksgiving when Marjorie joyfully pounced upon a letter in the Hall bulletin board, addressed to her, and bearing the agent's printed address in the upper left hand corner. The four typed lines which comprised the letter stated that the owner of the properties in which they were interested would be in Hamilton on the following Monday. Mr. Cutler requested them to call at his office at four o'clock of the succeeding Wednesday afternoon.

"I'll be glad to have this part of our great undertaking settled and off my mind," Marjorie buoyantly told Robin that afternoon as the two girls left Science Hall together. Marjorie had stopped at the Biological Laboratory for Robin in order to acquaint her with the welcome news.

"When we know definitely how much the properties are going to cost us we will have more incentive to go ahead and rush our first show of the season through. Nothing like knowing exactly where one stands, is there?" Robin finished interrogatively.

Marjorie quickly agreed with this statement. Her naturally orderly mind clamored for the suspense to end so that the real work might begin.

"It will be a good thing to have it off our chests by Wednesday," she congratulated. "Saturday's the first freshie-soph game, you know. We will have to be present. I can look forward to enjoying it, with this important question settled."

"Did that Miss Hurst answer your note?" Robin inquired. "I meant to ask you that before and kept forgetting it."

"No, she did not. The team practiced on the Friday after I wrote it. I dropped in purposely to watch those four girls. There were at least fifty students there besides myself. Miss Forbes made

a beautiful toss to basket. You should have heard the applause. The four kickers looked miffed but they didn't try any hatefulness with her, so far as I could see. I asked her that evening if matters had improved in that respect and she said they certainly had. I haven't been to practice since Thanksgiving."

"I stopped at the gym yesterday to watch the freshies. Phil was anxious to see them work. Miss Forbes was leading the team, as usual, in fast work. She seemed to be getting along with them very well. Your letter had a potent effect, I guess. I have no patience with small natures." Robin frowned her utter contempt for such marked ignobility.

"Nor I. If Miss Forbes should play a brilliant game on next Saturday she would be established as a star and her team-mates would have to be very careful how they treated her afterward. I hope she does. I believe she will."

With that Marjorie changed the subject by asking Robin to go to the Hall with her and remain to dinner. "We can go a long way toward planning our next entertainment. I imagine a play would be interesting for a starter. Leila makes a fine stage manager. Katherine Langly wrote a romantic play called 'The Maid of Honor.' It is a truly thrilling drama of the English Court during the reign of

Queen Elizabeth. During my soph year we talked of giving it. Miss Remson said there was a large cedar chest in the attic of the Hall full of courtier costumes. The students of several years back used them in giving Shakespearian plays." Marjorie's usual resourcefulness came to the surface.

"That would be great!" Robin was all enthusiasm at the proposal. "Katherine Langly ought to become a writer or a playwright or something literary. She has written articles and verses and short stories, so I have heard, just for literary practice. She has never tried to sell one of them. She belongs to the Silver Pen, doesn't she?"

"Yes. She was invited to join it during her freshman year. Think of that! She composed a theme for her English class, and the style was so perfect, Miss Faber read it out to the class," related Marjorie. "Soon after that she was invited to join the Silver Pen. Leila has often spoken of what fine girls some of the seniors were that year. She belongs to the Silver Pen, too. She was invited to join in her soph year."

"Portia belongs," returned Robin. "She is the only one of our crowd who made it. The others of us incline more toward music, I suppose. Phil is thinking of founding a musical sorority. That would be an innovation at Hamilton."

Full of the new project of producing Katherine's play, Marjorie and Robin could not resist going over to Randolph House that evening to see Kathie and ask her permission to their plan. At first she demurred. Finally she went to the trouble of hunting for it in the bottom of her trunk so that Robin might read it. The fact that the two girls desired it as a money-maker for their worthy undertaking carried weight with her. She gave her consent, her only objection having been that it was only "trash" and not good enough for a production in a literary sense.

When Marjorie opened her eyes the following Wednesday, on a cold December morning, her first thought was of her appointment that day. She half dreaded consulting the Hall bulletin board for fear of finding another disappointing letter from the agent. None appeared. She met Robin at half-past two that afternoon. They hailed a taxicab for the town of Hamilton, arriving at Mr. Cutler's office a few minutes before three.

As they were a little early, they were obliged to wait for the agent to finish the business he was transacting with two men. Marjorie drew a long expectant breath as the door to the street closed finally on the agent's masculine callers.

"Will you young ladies please come into my pri-

vate office?" he said, after greeting them in his courteous fashion. He opened the door for them and stood aside for them to enter.

The trio seated in the inner office, Mr. Cutler faced the two seniors with an expression that vaguely discomfited Marjorie. While she never tried to read the faces of those with whom she came into contact, she had a peculiar sense of divination which rarely failed her. The agent's features betrayed no indication of having pleasant news to offer them. On the contrary they were rather tensely set.

"I am very sorry to tell you," he began, and the hearts of both girls sank, "that the properties which you wished to buy have been sold." He jerked the words out as though anxious to be done with the disheartening information.

"Sold?" came the questioning chorus. Marjorie and Robin stared at Mr. Cutler, then at each ther.

"Yes. Let me explain. When I wrote you, Miss Dean, and made the appointment for today, I did not know this. The properties were unsold when Mr. Saxe, the owner, went to Chicago. In fact, there had been no demand for them. The surprising part of the affair is that the purchaser, on learning that Mr. Saxe was in Chicago, went there to see him. I did not furnish the address nor the in-

formation concerning these properties. The sale was conducted entirely away from me. The purchaser must have wanted them very much. Mr. Saxe was offered sixty thousand dollars for them. Naturally he accepted, at once."

"Sixty thousand dollars!" exclaimed Robin in a wondering tone. "That is a great deal more than we could have paid."

"I asked him what his own price would have been," continued Mr. Cutler. "He put it at forty thousand dollars. Not far, you see, from my estimate. They were purchased by a young woman, a Miss Cairns, I believe her name was. She may have been acting as agent for a private party. I don't know. It is rather a mystery to me—the whole transaction. I was sorry for myself as well," he added whimsically. "It lost me a good fat commission."

Neither Marjorie nor Robin said a word. It had taken not more than an instant's reckoning to decide that "Miss Cairns" must be Leslie Cairns, ex-student of Hamilton College. They knew she had been staying in the town of Hamilton. They knew of no other Miss Cairns.

"She must have known we wanted them!" Robin cried out resentfully, forgetting for a second the agent's presence.

"Did I understand you to say—" Mr. Cutler stopped. He did not in the least understand Robin's remark.

"Then there is no use in our wasting your time, Mr. Cutler," Marjorie said, rising. "We are disappointed, of course. We must look about us for another site. That's all. When we find one we will come to you and have you make the inquiries about it. We shall build our dormitory somewhere in the neighborhood of the campus, some day." She flashed the agent a dauntless little smile.

"It is too bad; too bad," he repeated. "I was greatly interested in your plan. Do either of you, by chance, know this Miss Cairns? The name is unfamiliar to me as of this town."

"We know of her. We do not know her personally. She is a very rich woman, in her own right, I have been told." It was Robin who now made answer.

"Mr. Saxe said she paid cash for the properties," nodded the agent.

"So far as we are concerned, we could have paid the price in cash of sixty thousand dollars. One of our sorority members had offered to finance us. We were to pay the debt to her at leisure. We felt it not right to tax the students-to-come, at Hamilton, with too heavy a burden of debt. We are in our senior year and just starting this movement. We

shall appoint certain students to replace us in this work when we have been graduated from Hamilton. They in turn will choose their successors." Marjorie took the trouble to make this explanation because of Mr. Cutler's genuine interest in their venture.

"Well, it is a noble ambition," praised the agent. "I will remember your need and look about me for a suitable site for your dormitory. One never knows what may develop. Now if you could buy that open strip of ground belonging to the Carden estate, it would be ideal for your purpose. The Cardens, those left of the family, are in Europe most of the time. They might decide suddenly to sell their estate. I'll keep you in mind," he assured.

"What do you think of that?" were Robin's first words, spoken out of earshot of the agent.

"What do *you* think?" countered Marjorie. Her tones bordered on bitterness. She was disturbed far more than she had shown while in the office.

"Just what I said in there." Robin indicated the office with a backward movement of her head. "She knew we wanted them and bought them on purpose to thwart us. She has been in Hamilton since last summer. How did she find out our plan, I wonder?"

"That's a question hard to answer. She must

have heard something concerning it last year after our show. It wasn't what one could call a secret. I mean the talk of building a dormitory. What seems queer to me is this. The moment we got in touch with Mr. Cutler, Miss Cairns hurried to Chicago to head off this Mr. Saxe before we could see him. We know Mr. Cutler did not tell her of us. He said he had never met her. She has heard something about it this fall."

"Then she must be friendly and in communication with certain students on the campus," was Robin's conjecture.

"Undoubtedly." Marjorie did not mention what she had observed on her way to mail the letter before the Thanksgiving vacation. It was of no particular use, she reflected. The properties were gone, the subject of them and their present owner might better be entirely dismissed.

"Hateful old snake!" was Robin's wrathful opinion of Leslie Cairns. "The idea of her coming back and living near the college after the disgrace of having been expelled!"

"We'll have to make the best of it. It needn't hinder us from going on and giving our play. The more money we earn, the more of our own we'll have when we find a site. Never say die, Robin. That is the only way to do." Marjorie was recov-

ering from the damper she had lately received. "It will all come out for the best. Remember what I say, and see if it doesn't. Some day we may be very glad we didn't get those properties. That is poor consolation just now, I know."

"Oh, I'm not cast into the depths," Robin replied in a lighter tone. "Nothing worth while is ever gained without a struggle. Leslie Cairns may find one of these days that she'd far rather have her sixty thousand dollars back than be the owner of those properties. I only hope she does."

CHAPTER XIX

AN UNRELENTING ENEMY

At a meeting of the Nineteen Travelers in Robin's room, a howl of indignation went up over the loss of the desired real estate. Discussion grew apace when Leslie Cairns' part in the transaction was revealed. More than one girl among them named Elizabeth Walbert as the source from which Leslie had received information of the intended movement toward erecting a dormitory. Marjorie soon learned that she was not the only one who had seen the two girls driving together.

This grave set-back only served to make the new sorority more determined to carry out their project. Marjorie having brought Kathie's play with her, she invited Leila to read it to the company. It was received with acclamation. Before the Travelers separated that evening, the parts had all been assigned. Lucy had volunteered the typing of each part during the evenings. She was sure that President Matthews would not object to her use of the

typewriting machine in his home office. With rehearsals under way at once, they hoped to give a performance of the play soon after New Years. Leila, Vera and Helen offered to go to the attic of Wayland Hall and inspect the chest of costumes. Vera laughingly announced herself as wardrobe mistress. Leila accepted the post of stage manager and threatened to be "a bully of some bad manners and a roaring voice, if you show yourselves too stupid."

The Saturday succeeding Marjorie's and Robin's disappointment sent Augusta Forbes to the heights of stardom in the basket ball arena. She went into the game fiercely resolving to outplay her teammates if she could. She was in the pink of condition and played with more snap and precision than Marjorie had ever seen her exhibit. She carried her team, who did not distinguish themselves, on to victory by her sensational plays. The freshmen won over the sophomores by eight points. Gussie was riotously lauded, as she deserved to be, and escorted in triumph about the gymnasium by the usual admiring mob of jubilant fans.

That evening she came to Marjorie's door and called her into the hall.

"I can't stay a minute," she commenced in evident embarrassment. "I only want to say that I couldn't have played so well if it hadn't been for

you. I was losing my nerve until you made those girls let me alone. One of them was really pleasant to me today. The others haven't been quite so snippy as before. Thank you, until I can do something splendid for you."

She turned and fairly ran down the hall, leaving Marjorie to look smilingly after her. She had not had time to say a word in return for the impulsive little recognition of her own worth.

"Why don't you invite your company inside the room instead of whispering to them in the hall?" demanded Jerry with a ferocious scowl, as Marjorie re-entered. "Once I was your honored confidant. Now I am—What am I? An idiot, let us say, for studying Political Science. It's werry dry and werry hard, Bean."

"You are still my honored confidant. I never considered you an idiot, and I loathe Political Science. I wasn't whispering outside the door, though. I was talking to *l'enfant angelique,* suppose we call her. She came to tell me that the other girls on the team are minding their own affairs as they should."

"I'm amazed," Jerry retorted genially. "Gloomy Gus has certainly arrived. She was a whirlwind today. Without her the freshies would not have whipped the sophs. She's agile, and has a good eye

for the basket. She landed some beauties this afternoon."

Marjorie seconded this opinion. After a further remark or two, Jerry turned her attention to the despised intracacies of Political Science. Marjorie made a valiant effort to study, but her mind roved to her personal affairs. She finally took paper and pencil and began to jot down the various things she must do before going home for the Christmas holidays.

Paramount among them was a visit she must make to Miss Susanna. The nine girls whom the old lady had taken into her liking had already ordered their tribute of flowers to be sent to her on the day before Christmas. Marjorie always felt rather timid about going to Hamilton Arms without a special invitation. She had done so once or twice that fall, as Miss Susanna had invited her to come to the Arms at any time. She finally decided to write her eccentric friend a note, asking permission to spend a part of the next Sunday afternoon with her. That would really be the only free time she would have before Christmas. College would close the following Thursday for the Yuletide holidays.

In the light of after events Marjorie looked back on that particular Sunday afternoon as having been the most perfect visit she had ever made Miss Sus-

anna. The old lady unbent conversationally to a marked degree. She related incidents concerning her life at Hamilton Arms, and also that of her distinguished uncle, Brooke Hamilton, which, ordinarily, would have remained obstinately locked behind her stubborn lips.

Listening to Marjorie's account of the recent failure of the Nineteen Travelers to secure the site for the proposed dormitory, Miss Susanna waxed quite indignant over the manner in which the loss had been effected.

"Too bad that man Cutler didn't have John Saxe's address," she said tersely. "I know John very well. I remember him as a youngster in kilts. I have been told that Cutler is an honorable gentleman. That's saying a good deal for a real estate agent in these days of trickery."

"He spoke of that piece of ground beyond those two blocks of houses which belongs to the Carden estate. He said the Cardens might decide to sell it some day." Marjorie spoke with the unfailing optimism of youth.

"Not to anyone connected with Hamilton College." Miss Susanna's face had set harshly at mention of the name Carden. "Alec Carden was the man I had trouble with that wound up my interest in Hamilton College. He is dead now. He had two sons, both married and the heads of families. One

of them lives at Carden Hedge, off and on. The other is a financier in New York, I believe. They were always a hard, tricky, dishonorable set. But enough of them. Cutler didn't say who owned that block of houses below the one you lost, did he?"

"Why, no," Marjorie replied after brief reflection. "I can't recall that he said more than that they were not for sale."

"Indeed, they are not for sale!" exclaimed Miss Hamilton. "Those houses belong to me. Uncle Brooke once owned the other block. He sold it to John Saxe's father."

"Then we need never hope to build our dormitory where your houses now stand." Marjorie could not resist saying this. She smiled, looking her hostess squarely in the eyes as she uttered the pointed remark.

It appeared to amuse Miss Susanna immensely. She laughed and said: "You are a straightforward child, aren't you? To please you I would be glad to part with those properties for a small sum. I can't consider the situation from that standpoint, unfortunately. I am done with Hamilton College. That settles the matter. Suppose we talk about something else."

Quite accustomed to the old lady's moods, Marjorie obligingly complied with the pre-emptory request. Neither did she allow it to intrude upon her

mind until she had left Miss Susanna that evening. She carried with her a basket of be-ribboned packages to be distributed among the eight girls of Miss Susanna's acquaintance. The old lady's emphatic order had been: "These are to be opened on Christmas morning; not a minute before."

As she hurried lightly along over the frozen ground, Marjorie wondered mightily what dire calamity had been precipitated to incur such implacable hatred against Hamilton College as Miss Susanna plainly harbored. She could never think of it rather than sorrowfully. It seemed so sad, that, after all the time and labor and love Brooke Hamilton had lavished upon the college, one of his own kin should be its most unrelenting enemy.

Meanwhile Miss Hamilton had rung for Jonas and was repeating to him all that Marjorie had said to her. Jonas occupied in her household the position of manager, servitor and valued friend. He was close to eighty years of age and had been at Hamilton Arms even longer than had Miss Susanna. He had, as a young man, served Brooke Hamilton faithfully during the latter's declining years.

"By right, Jonas, I ought to turn over that property to those energetic youngsters," she asserted in her quick, matter-of-fact fashion. "Their object is really a worthy one."

"They are trying to carry on *his* work," Jonas rejoined solemnly. "He would have wanted it to be so," Miss Susanna.

"Oh, I know it, Jonas; I know it." There was more than a shade of regret in the admission. "I can't overlook some things. The college doesn't deserve it from me; not after the way I was treated by the Board. No; they can't have it. If there was any good way to get hold of that strip of open ground of Cardens, I'd do it. Cutler could be trusted to sell it to Marjorie, and her friend Robin, without mentioning me in the transaction. I'd do it only to please the child, though; only to please her."

CHAPTER XX

ON HAMILTON HIGHWAY

Rehearsals of "The Maid of Honor" had been begun before the holiday vacation. Returned from their fortnight's recreation, it did not take the illustrious cast long to pick up again in their parts. Muriel, much to her amazement, had been chosen for Berenice, the heroine. Jerry reveled in the part of Piccato, the jester. Leila was to play the male lead of Florenzo, an ambassador from the Spanish Court. He falls desperately in love with Berenice, who has been promised from childhood to Lord Carstairs, an English nobleman, favored by Queen Elizabeth for his harshly dominating personality. Ronny was cast for Narita, a court dancer, who finally aids Berenice to escape from England with Florenzo, her courtier husband, whom she has secretly married.

On account of her height and breadth of shoulder, Augusta Forbes had been asked to take the part of Lord Carstairs. For several days after Leila had

requisitioned her services as an actor, she went about with her head in the clouds. Her chums were no less pleased over the honor that had fallen to "Gus." Neither had they been forgotten. The play required a large number of extra persons for courtiers, ladies in waiting, etc. The Bertram girls were among the first invited to grace the stage in these minor rôles.

Luckily for the managers of the performance, the cedar chest in the attic furnished enough really gorgeous court costumes to fit out the principal male characters. This was due to the fact of the small percentage of women in the Shakespearian dramas for which the costumes had been originally fashioned. As neither Leila, Vera, Helen nor Martha Merrick were overburdened with subjects, they took upon themselves the getting together of the costumes for the feminine contingent.

On a Friday evening, the latter part of January, "The Maid of Honor" was presented to an overflowing house. The gymnasium had, as usual, served as theatre on account of its seating capacity. While the stage of Greek Hall was much better as a stage, its auditorium would hold not more than two hundred persons.

Actors, author and managers received enough applause during the play, and enough adulation afterward, to turn their youthful heads. Honors

were so evenely divided among the principals it was hard to say who deserved the most praise. Katherine, as author, received, perhaps, the most admiring tribute of them all.

Acting upon Jerry's shrewd advice, two dollars had been set as the price of admission with no reserved seats. She had argued that two dollars was less than persons of their means usually paid for seats at a theatre. In order not to leave out the off-the-campus girls, Ronny had counted them up and bought tickets for them. These she commissioned Anna Towne to distribute with the stern warning: "Don't one of your crowd dare stay away from our play."

The net receipts of the play amounted to eleven hundred, forty dollars, which the gratified managers banked with gleeful satisfaction. Immediately they set to work on a new play, also by Kathie, entitled, "The Wyshinge Welle," a drama of the Saxons in Ethelbert's time. This was hailed with jubilation by Leila, who was especially fond of the life of this period of history. The latter part of February would see its presentation. If the promoters of drama at Hamilton found it did not interfere too greatly with their studies, they planned to give two more plays, a musical revue and a concert before the closing of the college in June.

After the stir occasioned by "The Maid of

Honor" had died out came a restful lull. January vanished rapidly into the deep pocket of the year. February arrived, sharp and blustering in its early days; warm and full of frequent thaws toward its close. Sunshine and absence of snow made it fine weather for automobiling, and the students of Hamilton were quick to take advantage of it.

"A lot of girls are out with their cars today," Marjorie observed to Jerry as she stood before the mirror of her dressing table adjusting her hat. "I almost wish I had one. Still, I don't need it, and it would be an extravagance for me. I wouldn't have a cent to give toward the dormitory. That's why Robin and some of the other Travelers won't have their cars here. The upkeep is so great. At home, garage rent is not more than ten dollars a month. The girls here pay from fifteen to twenty."

"That's because they are a college crowd. A garage proprietor figures that a girl who can afford to keep a car at Hamilton can afford to pay a good, stiff garage rent," declared Jerry shrewdly.

"Correct, as usual, Jeremiah." Marjorie turned from the mirror and began drawing on her gloves.

"My head is level, Bean; extremely so. I suppose you won't be back before nine o'clock."

"About that time. What shall I say to Miss Susanna for you?" It being Saturday afternoon, Marjorie was on the point of setting out for Hamil-

ton Arms. She had received a note from Miss Susanna on the day previous inviting her to spend the afternoon and take dinner at the Arms.

"Tell her to invite me next time," modestly requested Jerry. "Remind her that she hasn't entertained the crowd of us since before Christmas."

"I believe I *will* tell her that, Jeremiah." Marjorie tipped her head to one side and regarded her room-mate with apparent seriousness.

"If you do," Jerry looked startled, "I'll never forgive you, Marjorie Dean."

"Then I won't tell her." Marjorie's sober face relaxed into a teasing smile.

"Uh-h; I guess not," Jerry smiled with her. "I don't know what I shall do this afternoon. Hunt up Helen and make her take me to ride, maybe. Oh, I forgot. Leila is going to West Hamilton. She said she'd take me with her. I'm saved from my own society."

"I wish you were going with me." Marjorie paused regretfully, hand on the door knob.

"Don't worry over me, as Danny Seabrooke loves to say. Beat it." Jerry waved a jesting hand at Marjorie. "Shoo! Begone!"

Laughing, Marjorie went. As she left the college gates behind her she was thrilled with the joy of being alive on such a day. The clear skies, brilliant sunshine and pleasant tang in the air inspired

joy of living. Once on the highway, several girls driving their cars called out to her, asking her to ride. To each invitation she smilingly said "No." In the first place she could not very well ask a student she might ride with to drop her at Hamilton Arms. In the second place she infinitely preferred to walk.

"It is such a fine day I thought you might like to take a walk with me to see my head gardener," Miss Hamilton proposed shortly after Marjorie's arrival. "He fell on the ice not long ago and broke his arm. I am going to take him a basket of fruit and dainties. I am not fond of making calls, but I always try to look after my people when they have sickness or are in distress."

"I'd love to go with you," Marjorie heartily assured. "I'll carry the basket in memory of one other day when I carried a basket for you."

"A very fortunate day it was for me." Miss Susanna smiled brightly upon the pretty senior. Her affection for Marjorie was the brightest spot in her secluded life.

"We can't avoid taking the highway for some distance," deplored the old lady as they walked down the drive toward the entrance gates. "My gardener lives not far from it, but almost half a mile from here. There is a gardener's house on the estate, but he owns his home and prefers to live there.

This is just the kind of day for your Hamilton girls to be filling the highway with their automobiles. It is taking one's life into one's hands to venture along the road when they and their cars are out in numbers."

There was distinct aggressiveness in the speech. Miss Hamilton cherished a rooted antipathy for automobiles. She still kept in the Arms stable a pair of thoroughbred coach horses for her own use. Nothing could tempt her to ride in a motor car.

From Hamilton Arms to the adjoining estate the pike was broad, with wide level footpaths on each side. They could travel this portion of it without fear of accident from passing automobiles. A gradual curve in the road at the beginning of the next estate and it narrowed, continuing for two hundred yards or more between two slight elevations. It was the only "tricky" stretch of the highway, as Leila had often remarked when driving over it.

The top of these elevations formed footpaths only wide enough to permit the passing of persons, single file. The February thaw had left them too muddy to be used by pedestrians. It was a case of either take to the pike itself or walk in the mud.

"A nice state of affairs!" Miss Susanna exclaimed, her eyes snapping. "This is the way those good-for-nothing Cardens left their part of the highway. These banks should be leveled even with

the roadbed. Then they would be fit to walk on. Catch the Cardens spending any money for the good of the public! Compare the appearance of their estate with that of Hamilton Arms! Quite a difference, isn't there?"

"I should say so." Interested in what Miss Susanna was saying, Marjorie had relaxed for a moment her vigilant watch on the road. She now gazed critically at the wide, but not specially ornamental grounds surrounding the colonial residence which housed the hated Cardens when at home. She saw clearly the inferiority of this estate as compared to the dignity of ever-beautiful Hamilton Arms.

A sharp little shout of alarm, and her attention leaped to the road again. Around the curve, coming toward them, a car had dashed at full speed. Miss Susanna had cried out as she attempted to dodge it. So abruptly had it appeared around the curve she had not seen it until it was directly upon her. The driver lacked the skill to turn the car aside quickly enough to avert the calamity. Marjorie added her cry of horror to Miss Hamilton's. Before she could drag her elderly friend out of danger, she saw her apparently flung to one side. The devastating motor car gave a wicked lurch and whizzed on.

Bewildered by the suddenness of the accident, Marjorie stared unbelievingly when she next beheld

Miss Susanna not only move but raise herself from the ground to a sitting posture. Sight of this apparent miracle galvanized her into action. She sprang to Miss Hamilton calling out:

"Oh, Miss Susanna, I'm so thankful you weren't run over. Tell me where you are hurt. I saw the car fling you and——"

"The car didn't touch me. I made a leap and fell down just beyond it by not more than an inch or two. My foot slipped in the soft mud. I am all right. Help me up, child."

Marjorie had not attempted to raise the old lady to her feet before ascertaining whether she were able to stand. She now lifted her up with her grateful, young strength, exclaiming indignant sympathy over the muddy condition of Miss Hamilton's long coat of fine black broadcloth.

"Can you walk, Miss Susanna, or do you feel too much shaken? Perhaps you ought to stand still for a few minutes until you recover from the shock. Plenty of taxicabs from the station or the taxi stand below the campus pass here. I could hail one for you if you would ride in it to the gardener's house."

"No, not for me," refused the old lady with sharp decision. "I shall turn back and go home. I will send Jonas with the basket this evening."

"Take my arm. I can carry the basket with my other hand." As she talked Marjorie had busied

herself in brushing off what she could of the mud from the old lady's coat. Miss Susanna's hat was still jammed over one eye. Her small, sturdy hands were plastered with sticky mud. "Let me straighten your hat. There! Now hold out your hands." Marjorie wiped them with her own handkerchief.

"Such a catastrophe," scolded Miss Hamilton, and at my age! And all on account of a reckless girl driver! I think I had better take your arm, Marjorie. Can you manage to support me and carry that basket, too?"

Assuring Miss Hamilton that she could, the two slowly retraced their steps. A reaction soon setting in, Miss Susanna became silent for a time. Marjorie said nothing, fearing conversation might prove an undue strain upon the victim of the accident.

"The least that young savage could have done was to come back and see if there were any casualties," Miss Hamilton burst forth abruptly as they entered the gateway of the Arms. She had now sufficiently recovered from the shock to feel belligerent toward the culprit. "A Hamilton girl, I suppose. Did you recognize her, Marjorie?"

"Yes; I know who she is," Marjorie replied reluctantly.

"Very good. I shall report her to President Matthews," announced Miss Susanna, wagging her head. "You are to tell me her name, or, better still,

you and I will go together to his office and report her."

Marjorie felt consternation rise within her. The last thing in the world she wished to do was to go to President Matthews' office on such an errand, even with Miss Susanna. Quick as a flash came the reminder of the president's threat to ban automobiles at Hamilton, made at the time of the accident to Katherine Langly.

"Miss Susanna," she began impulsively, hardly knowing how to speak her mind without giving offense, "I know that girl who nearly ran you down deserves to be reported. She has the reputation of being a poor driver, and a very reckless one. Most of the Hamilton girls who drive cars are careful. Two years ago, Miss Cairns, the one who bought the properties from us, ran down Katherine. She was ill two weeks from the shock. She just missed having her spine permanently injured. She did not report Miss Cairns to President Matthews but——"

"And you think because Katherine was simpleton enough to allow a murderous act like that to go unpunished that I ought to do likewise," supplied Miss Susanna in a whip-like tone of anger which Marjorie had never before heard her use. You are——"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Susanna, I did not mean——" Marjorie re-commenced in a distressed voice.

"Listen to me." The irate old lady held up her hand by way of command. "You are talking utter nonsense." The last of the Hamiltons was not accustomed to being crossed. Shaken by her fall, she was now in a highly querulous state, common to those over sixty. "Not report that young heathen —ridiculous! This girl must be a friend of yours whom you are trying to shield. Certainly I shall report her. I hold it important to do so. You may know how important I consider reporting her when I propose going to your president myself. I—who have not set foot on the campus for years. I find I am not well enough to have you at the Arms to dinner this evening. I will bid you good afternoon. Set the basket on the steps."

They had reached the broad flight of stone steps leading to the veranda of the Arms as the offended great-niece of Brooke Hamilton snapped out these pithy statements.

"Good afternoon, Miss Susanna." The piteous light in Marjorie's eyes changed to one of justly wounded pride. Very gently she set the basket on the top step and turned away. Her friendship with the last of the Hamiltons had terminated as abruptly as it had begun.

CHAPTER XXI

MISUNDERSTOOD

"For goodness' sake what brought you home in such a hurry?" Jerry came breezily into the room just before six o'clock to find Marjorie sitting by a window. In her hand was an open book. Her eyes were not fixed upon it. They looked absently out upon the brown sweep of campus. There was a pathetic droop to her red lips which Jerry did not miss.

"What's the matter, Bean; dearie dearest Bean?" she commiserated, going up to Marjorie and dropping her hands sympathetically upon her chum's shoulders.

"I—oh, Jeremiah, I just feel sad—that's all." Marjorie's chin quivered suspiciously.

She had turned away from Miss Susanna feeling like a child who was being sent home for bad behavior. She had been entirely misunderstood. She had quickly realized the utter futility of attempting to make herself clear under the circumstances. So she had proudly accepted her dismissal.

"Tell your old friend, Jeremiah, all about it," coaxed Jerry. She took her hands from Marjorie's shoulders and employed them in drawing up a chair. Placing it directly opposite Marjorie she sat down, leaned far forward and beamed on her vis-a-vis with an ingratiating show of white teeth.

The ghost of a smile reluctantly crept to Marjorie's lips. That particular expression of Jerry's was irresistible. She reached out and gratefully patted Jerry's hand.

"Thanks for the pat." Jerry continued to beam. "Next we will hear your sad story. I believe you have been crying, Marjorie Dean!" she accused in sudden concern. "Tell me what and who made you cry and I will go forth on the war path!"

"You can't, this time. It—was Miss Susanna." Marjorie swallowed the rising lump in her throat and steadied her voice. "She misunderstood me. I can never go to Hamilton Arms again."

"Good night! That *is* tough luck! Poor Marjorie; no wonder you feel all broken up."

Inspirited by Jerry's warm sympathy, Marjorie related, with an occasional catch in her voice, the afternoon's direful events.

"I wasn't going to ask Miss Susanna not to report Miss Walbert," Marjorie sorrowfully explained. "I was going to ask her please not to make it any harder for the other girls who have cars here than

she could help. I spoke of Kathie's accident because I wished her to know what President Matthews had said about banning automobiles at Hamilton. I was going to tell her that someone else reported Miss Cairns for running down Kathie when she stopped me. She thought I was holding Kathie up to her as a glowing example, and I never meant it that way," Marjorie mournfully concluded.

"She had no business to cut you off without a hearing," Jerry criticized with some resentment. "I always had an idea she was like that. Well, the gun-powder mine didn't blow up as soon as I thought it would. This is the first squabble you two have had. She will get over it. She loves you dearly. After she descends from her pinnacle of wrath she will probably think things over and write you a note."

Marjorie shook her head with somber positiveness. "No, she won't. She considers me in the wrong. She didn't even give me time to tell her Miss Walbert's name. I should have known better than to say a word so soon after the accident. She was shaken and generally upset. I spoke before I thought. Miss Susanna seems more like one of us than an old lady. I am always forgetting her age. She is so brisk and energetic."

"I don't believe she will go to Doctor Matthews. She may write him a note. I doubt it, though."

"I think she will go to see him. She was so very angry. It is my duty to write her a note and give her Miss Walbert's name. She asked me for it, and she has a right to it." Marjorie fell silent with the contemplation of this idea.

"Who was with the would-be-murderess of innocent pedestrians?" Jerry questioned sarcastically.

"A freshman from Alston Terrace," Marjorie answered. "I never saw her with Miss Walbert before. I have seen her once or twice with Miss Forbes."

"She must be fond of extremes," commented Jerry. "Miss Run-'em-down Walbert has a horrible reputation on the campus as a driver. I wish Doctor Matthews would rise up in his might and ban her as a no-good motorist and nuisance. The Hamiltonites would tender him a laurel wreath, or a diamond medal, or something quite nice," finished Jerry with a chuckle.

"If it were she alone who would be punished, I shouldn't care. I told Miss Susanna she deserved to be reported. It was the innocent I was thinking of; not the guilty. Cars are a convenience as a well as a pleasure when they are in the hands of girls like Leila, Vera, Helen and some others. I shall write a note to Miss Susanna and try to explain myself. I can't bear to be misjudged by her. Oh, dear! It

is just one more hard thing to do that I don't like to do."

"Don't write it tonight then," advised Jerry. "You are still too close to your trouble. Wait a day or two before you write."

"I suppose I'd better," Marjorie listlessly agreed.

"Yes; you had." Jerry adopted a purposely lugubrious tone.

"Stop making fun of my sorrow." Marjorie could not resist a faint giggle at Jerry's ridiculous imitation of herself.

"Aha! That's more like it. Now I propose we shut up shop and go to Baretti's for dinner. I've been hungrily thinking of fried chicken and hot waffles with maple syrup this P. M. They aren't going to have 'em here for dinner, either. There's to be beefsteak *en casserole*, which is all very nice, but my mind is on chicken and waffles."

"I guess I'd rather have chicken, too. I'm beginning to be hungry in spite of my troubles." Marjorie rose from her seat near the window. "You're a true comforter, Jeremiah. Wait until I bathe my face and smooth my hair and I'll go anywhere you say."

"Fine!" returned Jerry cheerily. "It will be the first time you and I ever went out alone to dine. The girls have always been with us. Nowadays Ronny is so popular I hardly catch a glimpse of her

on the campus. But the five little old Lookouts always congregate at ten-fifteen every night. That helps."

Jerry referred to a custom begun only that year. The great popularity of the five girls, which had been steadily increasing since their freshman year, served to separate them during their leisure hours from each and one another. Muriel had proposed they gather every night at ten-fifteen for a brief chat before retiring.

Arrived at Baretti's, Marjorie's pensive mood still clung to her. Jerry made no direct effort to dispel it. She knew it would have to wear away of its own accord. Baretti's delicious fried chicken and extra crisp waffles was a favorite order with the Hamilton students. Engaged presently in eating this palatable fare, Marjorie started in sudden surprise at an unfamiliar voice at her elbow. She glanced up from her plate to meet the eyes of the freshman she had seen that afternoon in Elizabeth Walbert's car.

"Please don't think me intrusive, Miss Dean," the freshman was saying. "I noticed you when you came in and I was so anxious to learn whether the woman with you today on the pike was injured by Miss Walbert's car. I begged her to turn around and go back, but she wouldn't. She said she was sure that she hadn't come within several feet of the

woman. It looked to me as though she were almost under the wheels. Of course, I only caught a glimpse of both of you, so I couldn't really judge exactly what happened."

The girl paused, looking signally embarrassed as she met the clear steady gaze of Marjorie's eyes.

"The woman was not run over. In trying to get out of the car's way she fell. As she is an old lady, she was considerably jarred by the fall. Her coat was badly splashed with mud." Marjorie delivered the information with impersonal courtesy.

"I'm glad to hear she wasn't run over," sighed the other girl, looking genuine relief. "Was—was she a relative of yours?"

"No; a friend."

"I hope you don't hold me to blame in any way, Miss Dean. It is the first time I ever rode in Miss Walbert's car, and it will be the last. I was waiting for a taxicab in town and she came along and offered to ride me back to the campus. I am Miss Everest, a freshie. I don't know what you think of me. I am awfully concerned about your elderly friend. Anyway, I feel better for having seen you and cleared myself as best I can."

Marjorie could not overlook the evident honesty of the apology. The half appealing expression in the freshman's eyes did not escape her notice.

"I do not blame you, in the least, Miss Everest,"

she said quickly. "You were not driving the car. I blame Miss Walbert severely. Since coming to Hamilton she has had a great deal of trouble over her driving, for which she is entirely to blame. I do not know what the outcome of this affair will be for her. My friend is very angry and may take it up with Doctor Matthews. I speak frankly. If Miss Walbert receives a summons she may name you as having been in her car when she so nearly ran down my friend."

"Oh-h-h!" The ejaculation breathed consternation. "I shouldn't like that. Still, I am not afraid. I can only tell the truth."

"Doctor Matthews is a very fine and just man. If any such thing occurs he will not censure you for Miss Walbert's fault." Marjorie smiled up brightly into the half clouded face above her. In answer to an imperative touch of one of Jerry's feet against hers, she said: "This is my room-mate and dear friend, Miss Macy."

Both girls bowed. Jerry affably invited the freshman to join them at dessert. She was with another freshman at a table farther down the room and declined. She appeared highly gratified at such cordiality on the part of the two seniors and left them with glowing cheeks and happy eyes.

"Drop one acquaintance from Kill-'em-off Walbert's list," observed Jerry as the freshman departed.

"That freshie is done with her for good and all. Too bad our amateur motorist didn't enlist for overseas service in the late war. She would have done great execution driving a tank. She'd have sent the enemy fleeing in all-directions."

Marjorie could do no less than laugh at this far-fetched conceit. "I thought I had best warn Miss Everest of what she might expect," she said, her face sobering. "What I said about Miss Walbert was deliberate. I mentioned Miss Susanna as my friend and I may never have a chance to speak to her again." Marjorie added this with a kind of sad bitterness.

"Oh, yes, you will. Don't be down-hearted, beautiful Bean," hopefully assured Jerry. "Write your letter to your offended lady of the Arms and see what happens. She can't misunderstand you after she reads it."

"Maybe she won't misunderstand me, but that doesn't mean she will be friendly with me or even with you girls again. She detested girls until she met us. She'll probably think she was foolish ever to bother with us. Even if she felt she had misjudged me, she is such an odd, proud little person she might not be able to bring herself to write me. If she doesn't answer my letter, then I shall never write her again. I'll understand that she did not care to continue the friendship."

CHAPTER XXII

A DISMAYED PLOTTER

THE author of the mischief, Elizabeth Walbert, was not concerning herself over what had occurred on Saturday afternoon on Hamilton Highway. She had not the remotest idea as to the identity of the elderly woman she had come so nearly injuring. She knew that Marjorie had been with the woman. Very scornfully she had derided Miss Everest's worried conjectures as to who the woman might be, or, if she had been badly injured.

"An old scrub woman or some sort of servant, very likely," she had airily said. "Don't be a silly. Those two had no business to be walking along the middle of the pike. The pike is for *autos,* not pedestrians." She had utterly flouted the suggestion that she go back and ascertain what had happened as the result of her reckless dash around a corner.

Afterward, when alone, she resolved not to bother again with Jane Everest. She was just

another of those stupid freshies who had no daring or spirit in them. Elizabeth was at that very moment sulking because she could not persuade certain freshmen at Wayland Hall who had until recently been her allies to waylay Augusta Forbes some evening on the campus and give her the "good scare" she had fondly planned. Gussie often spent an evening at Acasia House with a freshman who recited Greek in her section. The two girls were wont to prepare the lesson together. Thus Gussie never started for Wayland Hall much before ten o'clock. Elizabeth had learned this fact from an Acasia House freshie. Her idea had been this: Half a dozen girls, headed by herself, were to dress in sheets and glide out upon Augusta from a huge clump of bushes which she must pass in taking the most direct route from the one campus house to the other. Gussie was then to be surrounded, hustled to a neighboring tree and tied to it. The industrious spectres were then to leave her to free herself as best she could. The deed was to be done on a moonless night when the weather was not severely cold.

"Suppose she can't free herself?" one of the freshmen had put to Elizabeth on hearing her plan. "We wouldn't dare leave her there all night. You say you know she comes from Acasia House often

at about ten. We'd not have time to come back and untie her before the ten-thirty bell."

"It wouldn't hurt her to stay out there awhile if it weren't cold," was the cruel response. "I would slip down and out of the Hall about midnight, creep up behind her and cut the rope with a very sharp knife."

"Until midnght!" had gasped one girl. *"No, sir;* not for me. Besides, you might cut her hand in the dark while trying to free her. You are crazy, Bess. Give up such daring schemes. They'll only get you into trouble."

"We might easily be seen, dressed in sheets," another had objected. "Remember it is winter and there aren't any leaves on those bushes."

"That wouldn't make any difference if the night were dark. I see plainly you girls aren't nervy enough for a little fun that wouldn't do the baby elephant any harm. In fact it would be the best thing that could happen to her. She has bragged a lot of not being afraid of anything. Never mind. I'll think of some nice little plan, all by myself."

This last icy assurance, delivered with a haughty crest of her empty head had not impressed her hearers. She had gone a step too far with them. From then on they began to drop away from her.

Disgusted with their lack of support, she undertook to interest certain juniors in her plan. She

dared not come out frankly with it. Her vague allusions as to what might be done met with utter defeat. Her classmates, such as had even voted for her for the freshman presidency, knew her better now. They tolerated her but disliked her.

Finding no one interested in her schemes for revenge, she was none the less determined to haze Gussie. On the Sunday afternoon following the disaster to Miss Susanna, she called Leslie Cairns on the telephone and asked her to go for a ride. Leslie accepted the invitation cannily, stipulating that they should use her roadster. She was to meet Leslie in front of Baretti's.

Since the first day of their meeting in the Ivy, Elizabeth had not dared mention the subject of Leslie's expulsion from college. Leslie had talked of it a little herself that day. Then she had put up the bars. What Elizabeth burned to consult her on was what she might do to haze Augusta.

Anxious to keep Leslie in a good humor, she racked her brain for campus gossip that would interest the ex-senior.

"Go ahead. Let's hear the news from the knowledge shop," ordered Leslie as the roadster sped south under her practical hands. "Then I have a bit of news for you. Maybe you won't like it for a second or two. After you get used to it, you will."

"What is it? You tell me first. My scraps of

news can wait." Eager curiosity animated the junior's vapid features.

"No; I'm anxious to hear what's happened over there." Leslie made a backward movement of the head in the direction of the college.

"All right." Elizabeth gave in, slightly sulky. Soon she forgot to sulk as she weirdly embellished truth for her companion's gratification.

Leslie listened, calmly sorting out in her own mind the proportion of truth contained in the other's narrations.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you about yesterday," Elizabeth declared, when her budget of gossip was exhausted. "I was out driving with a freshie who has an awful crush on me and I nearly ran over Bean and a scrub woman, or servant—anyway an old fossil she was with. They were marching along the middle of the pike near the Carden Estate. I came around the corner pretty fast. I was on my own side of the pike, though. I'm sure of that. I know——"

A sudden deep scowl corrugated Leslie's forehead. "You are positive you didn't hit either of them, are you?" she asked in an odd, sharp voice.

"Of course not. Everest, the freshie, said I knocked the old lady down. It scared the silly goose. She grew quite panicky over it. I knew I didn't come within six feet of either of them. She

wanted me to go back. I was too wise to do that."

"What did this woman look like?" again came the tight, tense tones. "I suppose, though, you couldn't tell much about her."

"No, I couldn't. Evie said she was dressed in black and small."

"You should have gone back." Leslie's loose lips tightened in displeasure. It was easy enough to give advice which she herself had not followed on a similar occasion. "For all you know that woman may have been faculty. Bean's on very good terms with them."

"Oh, pshaw! This woman looked old, from the glimpse I caught of her—too old to be faculty. She'd have nothing to report anyway. They had no business on the pike in the very path of machines, coming and going."

"Bess, you don't seem to have good sense." Leslie had grown caustic. "You *know* Matthews threatened to ban cars when I ran down Langly. If you are reported for this, you're *done* with your buzz wagon at Hamilton. So are all the other students. Oh, this is too bad! And all because you are either too stubborn or else too stupid to learn to drive!"

"I don't understand you, Leslie, and you will kindly stop calling me stupid," sputtered Elizabeth, her face very red.

"You will understand in a minute. As it hap-

pens, your punk driving may have seriously interfered with a business venture of mine. Since I left college I have been looking about for a chance to go into business for myself. One of my ventures is to be a garage near Hamilton College." Leslie spoke rapidly and with displeased force. "Now I chose to even my score with Bean at the same time. That's why I wanted you to find out about those properties. I heard last year before I was fired from college about a wonderful dormitory the little prigs were going to try to build near the campus, for the benefit of plebian beggars who want to go through college on nothing a year.

"I remembered it after I left Hamilton. That's why I came back and took up a residence here. I made up my mind I'd find out the site they were after and take it away from them. The woman I am with is my chaperon, not my aunt. I tried to get Alida and Lola interested in the affair, but couldn't. I knew you could help me, so I decided to forget the past and be friends with you again."

"Why didn't you explain all this to me in the beginning, instead of deceiving me so?" burst forth Elizabeth rancorously.

"It had to be kept a dead secret. You would have told it to someone, sure as fate. I'm telling you now. That's soon enough," returned Leslie coolly. "Now listen to the rest. I have bought those board-

ing-house properties west of the campus—the block that contains the seven houses. I paid sixty thousand dollars for them and I am going to have 'em torn down and a mammoth garage put up there. You see what will happen to my investment if cars are banned at Hamilton."

"Oh, bother your old investment!" Elizabeth had grown angrier as she listened to Leslie. "It will never amount to a string of glass beads. Am I to blame because people won't keep out of the path of my car?"

"The path of your car!" Leslie repeated with a sarcastic snicker. She was equally incensed at her companion's disparagement of her business venture. "Where *is* that wonderful path? All over the road, I'll say. The state ought to issue you a non-license instead of a license."

Thus began a quarrel which raged hotly for several minutes. Elizabeth was furious at having been deceived by Leslie. The latter was utterly out of temper over the seeds of catastrophe to her plans which the junior had sown. They were a long way from Hamilton when the altercation began. In the midst of it Leslie turned the roadster about and started back over the route they had come. By the time the campus wall appeared in sight a black silence had fallen between them. Nor was it broken

until Leslie brought her car to an even stop at the eastern entrance.

"You may as well get out here," she sullenly dictated.

"Sorry I didn't have my own car. I needn't have troubled you then," vituperated Elizabeth, as she hastily bundled herself out of the roadster.

"A good thing for public safety you didn't have it," Leslie sneered. "If my investment turns out unprofitable, it will be *your* fault."

With that she drove on, her brief connection with Elizabeth Walbert at an end. At the height of her anger, a cool ruthlessness behind it informed her that the time had come to drop the junior irrevocably. She no longer needed her services. If cars should be banned at Hamilton College, as a result of Elizabeth's reckless blundering, she would know it soon enough. Shrewd use of her eyes would quickly furnish her with the information. She laughed to herself as she recalled the junior's rage.

The serious side of the situation returning, all signs of mirth faded from her rugged face. The investment she had made had been planned with a view toward placating her father. Once she had the garage ready for business she intended writing him of what she had done. There was no large garage near the college. Students owning cars were obliged to place them wherever they could find a

vacant space in the several garages between the college and the town of Hamilton. A few students even had been obliged that year, owing to lack of accommodations, to leave their automobiles in town.

Leslie's idea of building a large garage near the campus would not have appealed to a present-day business man. The expense for site, the outlay in tearing down, in order to rebuild, not to mention the cost of erecting the garage—these items would have made the day of large profits too far distant. Leslie, however, was not considering either expense or profits. Her double aim was to even her score with Marjorie Dean, at the same time impressing her unforgiving father with her great business ability.

Now disaster threatened, precipitated by the very pawn she had used to further her own ends. She could only hope that Elizabeth's blundering had not caused mishap. She was sure Marjorie would not report the matter. What her companion might do remained to be seen. It would depend entirely upon the identity of the elderly woman in black.

While Elizabeth Walbert and Leslie Cairns were engaged in altercation, Marjorie was trying to frame a letter to the offended mistress of Hamilton Arms. She was alone in her room, Jerry having wisely decided to leave her in absolute quiet while she composed the difficult message. She wrote and

rewrote, tore into bits what she had written and began again. What she set down seemed a poor expression of her mind in the matter.

The shadows of late afternoon had begun to lengthen when she finally sealed the product of her painful industry and addressed the envelope to her offended friend. Though her heart was heavy, her mind was more at ease. Miss Susanna might ignore her written explanation so far as acknowledging it went. Nevertheless, Marjorie felt that she could not ignore the truth it contained.

CHAPTER XXIII

"GETTING EVEN"

Due to the unexpected quarrel which had sprung up between herself and Leslie, Elizabeth had gained no fruitful suggestions regarding ways and means of hazing from Leslie Cairns. She told herself she did not care. No doubt Leslie would have coolly advised her to "drop it." This the vengeful girl had no intention of doing. Her spleen against Augusta Forbes had grown to an extent which made her determined to "even up" with the detested freshie, no matter how great the risk of detection. She firmly believed herself to be too clever to be detected.

The first days of a stormy March whistled and shrieked across the campus before Elizabeth hit upon a scheme which seemed within her scope. Fortune appeared to favor her in that Augusta exchanged sharp words with Alma Hurst and Ida Weir, the two freshmen who made it hardest for her on the basket ball team. The trouble occurred

between the halves of a practice game. Elizabeth chanced to be standing near enough to the two, as a spectator, to hear a part of it. It gave her an excuse to seek out Alma and Ida that evening and have a confidential talk with them. Both players were bitter against Augusta, who had, as usual, been valiantly standing up for her rights. Elizabeth's crafty insinuations, which grew soon to open denunciation of Gussie, fell upon willing ears. Thereafter the trio were to be found with their heads together as they formulated their plot against independent Gussie.

Continued stormy weather forced Elizabeth to abandon the idea of tying Augusta to a tree on the campus and leaving her there. It also meant too great a hazard. Three of them could hardly manage the tall, broad-shouldered freshie when it came to a question of physical strength. She had tried to coax a sufficient number of girls into her scheme and had failed. She decided to resort to the method she had earlier employed of doing some mischief to Augusta's room. Over and over the three plotters discussed the subject, proposing this trick and that. Many of the proposals were too hard for accomplishment to be considered more than briefly. Every now and then one or the other would hit upon something that could be added to the list which they had made up of depredations easy "to get away with."

"The time has come to act," were the words with which Elizabeth greeted the two freshmen one afternoon. They had met her by appointment in the library. Neither lived at Wayland Hall. She had cunningly warned them against coming there until they should have "put over the great stunt." Then no suspicion could, later, be attached to them.

"Glad to hear it," Alma Hurst said with a disagreeable smile." If ever I detested a girl I do that overgrown, domineering freshie. You can't make me believe that she didn't go to Miss Dean with a great long string of yarns about us. Miss Dean wrote me a *hateful* note. In it she claimed the sports committee had been observing us for quite awhile. I know they *hadn't.* I wouldn't believe *her* any sooner than I would Miss Smarty Forbes."

"Better not let any of Miss Dean's friends hear you say that." Elizabeth arched her eye-brows with a knowing air. "Her crowd think her perfection. She is awfully influential on the campus. I never tried to put anything over on her for fear of getting into difficulties."

"I've heard she was a power here." The accompanying shrug denoted supreme indifference. "I'm not likely to come within conversational range of her crowd. She doesn't approve of me, nor her pals, either. Miss Forbes gets all the babying from *them.* Can't say I admire their taste."

Elizabeth gave a contemptuous sniff. "Miss Dean pretends to be very noble and talks a lot about observing Hamilton traditions. She treated me abominably the day I landed on the station platform, a freshie." For the twentieth time Elizabeth recited her imaginary grievance. The tale was, as usual, a far departure from truth. It impressed her listeners because they wished to be impressed by it.

"I'm not surprised." Alma was still smarting from the merited rebuke Marjorie had delivered her by letter. She's been *so* unfair toward us. Proffy Leonard allows her to run basket ball. Speaking of hazing—was she hazed two years ago? I heard so, and that the girls who hazed her were expelled from college. I heard they were seniors."

"They were seniors," nodded Elizabeth, "seventeen of them. They weren't found out until late last year. If you are caught hazing a student, off goes your head. We must be careful. No reason why we shouldn't get away with our plan, though. This is what we'll do and when we'll do it. I am——"

"Did Miss Dean know who hazed her? Who reported the seventeen seniors?" demanded Ida Weir with manifest uneasiness.

"I don't know what Miss Dean knew. One of the hazers betrayed the others and left college." Elizabeth proceeded to paint Dulcie Vale's treachery

in lurid colors. "Don't worry about being caught," she frowned, impatient at the interruption. "*I* know how to manage matters. The girl who planned the flivver that shut her crowd out of college thought herself a wizard. She was far from being one."

"I wouldn't consider such a risky scheme for two seconds if I weren't bent on making things lively for that big booby of a Miss Forbes." Alma's eyes flashed vindictively. "Go ahead, Bess. We won't interrupt you again."

"Very well." Elizabeth accepted the apology as her due. "To begin with, we will muss up her room on the night of the next show Miss Dean's crowd give. I hear they are going to put on a concert soon. They have made a lot of money with those two plays they've already given. Catch them asking any of us to take part," she interpolated enviously. "I wouldn't if they *begged* me to be in one. But that's neither here nor there. The night they give their old concert everybody from Wayland Hall will be over at the gym attending it. We'll buy tickets for it. Supposedly, we'll be there; only we won't. Who can prove that we were not there? Not an easy matter? What?" Elizabeth intensely admired this imitation of Leslie Cairns on her part.

"Fine!" exclaimed Alma. "Since we don't room at Wayland Hall, no one can possibly suspect us, Ida."

"Suppose anyone happened to see us coming to the Hall?" Ida proposed to regard the risk from all points.

"No one will see you," cut in Elizabeth pettishly. "You will have to come over here after everyone has started for the concert. I have a latch key that fits the front door. I found it one day in the hall near Remson's office. I heard afterward, she had lost her key, but I hung on to the one I found. I've used it after ten-thirty several times. Maybe it isn't a convenience! You can let yourself into the house with it and run upstairs in a flash. If one of the maids happened to see you she wouldn't pay any attention to you, unless you came in too late. You'll have to strike a happy medium as to the time you get here. Most of the girls will be gone from here by a quarter to eight. You ought to arrive at ten minutes of eight."

"Easiest thing in the world," Alma said confidently. "No one would think twice about seeing us. If they should it would only be to conclude we had come over to the concert with some of the Wayland Hall crowd. That key makes everything lovely. We'll be able to let ourselves in without a bit of fuss."

"Next I'll tell you the programme." Under pretense of showing the two freshmen what, to a casual observer, would have passed for notes made in the

library, Elizabeth carefully went over with them the list of depredations to be carried out in Augusta's room.

"Maybe she won't look sick when she comes from the concert and sees what has happened!" gleefully predicted Alma. "It will serve that uppish room-mate of hers right. I'll see she doesn't escape. What about your room-mate, Bess? Can you keep the stuff we shall use out of her sight entirely?"

"She never sees anything but her books," was the contemptuous reply. "Leave all that to me. I know what I'm doing. Remember what I say. No one will ever guess who upset baby's room. It will go down in the annals of Wayland Hall as an absolute mystery."

CHAPTER XXIV

VANDALISM

THE March days came and went, cold and frost-bitten for the most part, and still Marjorie's letter to Miss Susanna met with no reply. Each day Marjorie wondered if she would be summoned to President Matthews' office as a result of a report lodged with him by the last of the Hamiltons against Elizabeth Walbert. Not that the doctor needed her testimony to substantiate Miss Susanna's complaint. She had an idea the irate old lady might leave her name out of it entirely. Should Miss Susanna mention her as having been a witness to the mishap, Doctor Matthews would no doubt insist on sending for her privately. He could not fail to be interested in the news that she had had an acquaintance of some standing with Brooke Hamilton's great-niece. She thought this because of the talk she had once had with him concerning Hamilton Arms and its eccentric mistress.

The "Wyshynge Welle" had been received with

great enthusiasm. At the earnest request of the faculty it had been repeated a week from the night of its first performance. The second audience was composed of faculty and friends of the faculty residing in the adjacent suburban towns who were interested in matters germane to Hamilton College.

In writing the quaint play Katherine had shown actual genius. So had Leila Harper in staging and producing it. The Nineteen Travelers were delighted with it and planned to pass it on, to become a regular yearly performance at Hamilton. Phyllis Moore had assisted Leila in the production of it, so that she might be proficient in stage managing it the next year. Both performances of the play added twenty-four hundred dollars to the Fund.

With spring on the threshold, Marjorie and Robin announced their concert as next on the list of entertainments. It was to be given the latter part of April. The latter part of May would come the musical revue to end their season. They calculated that the year's efforts would net them over five thousand dollars. Phyllis and her orchestra would be vital to the concert. So would Robin, Blanche Scott and half a dozen students with exceptionally fine voices. Marjorie wished Ronny to give one dance, an exquisite interpretation called "The Return of Spring." Marjorie had seen her dance it in private several times. It was her favorite of

Ronny's many wonderful interpretations. Robin had arranged an off-stage chorus of voices to go with it which rendered it even more beautiful.

Whenever Marjorie stopped to think of the yawning gap between herself and Miss Hamilton it made her sad. She tried to keep it out of her thoughts as much as possible. Like a good soldier she marched on toward the end of her hike through the Country of College, face front, steps firm and steady. The eight girls who had been entertained at the Arms never mentioned Miss Susanna's name to her. She had told them all in confidence what had occurred, feeling it was their right to know of the estrangement.

She had been strongly tempted to send her offended friend tickets for the play recently given. She had refrained from doing so, fearing lest the old lady would return them, plus a check for the sum they amounted to. As the date of the concert approached, she wished often that Miss Susanna would attend it. She was an ardent lover of music, and Marjorie was very proud of the programme. It was highly representative of the best in music. She knew her wish to be entirely in vain. Even if Miss Susanna and she were on good terms, the last of the Hamiltons would not honor the campus with her presence.

The weather turning warm and balmy, even for

April, the night of the concert saw the fast-reviving campus aflutter with delicate evening finery. The students were only too glad of an opportunity to display the pretty new evening frocks most of them had worn for the first time at home during the Easter holidays.

The afternoon preceding the concert a wholesale laying out of evening frills went on at Wayland Hall. Elizabeth Walbert's outfit for the evening did not consist of dainty wearing apparel. A stroke of sheer good luck had brought Miss Schultz a dinner invitation to the home of Professor Wenderblatt. The professor was giving a dinner to fourteen guests prior to the concert. Miss Schultz had dressed and departed before six o'clock, leaving Elizabeth a free hand from then on.

The moment the dining room opened she hastened in to dinner, ate hurriedly and rushed upstairs again. The motley outfit she produced from her dress closet and carefully set out on the floor of her room would have puzzled anyone excepting herself. She knew the precise use of each article. She was also prepared if she found Gussie's door locked. She had long since learned that the key to her door would unlock that of Gussie's.

Half-past seven saw Wayland Hall practically emptied of its residents. There were no reserved seats save those on the front row down stairs, which

had been given over to the faculty. It was a case of the earlier the arrival the better the seat. The gymnasium doors opened at seven-fifteen.

Quarter to eight saw two dark forms emerge from behind a clump of fast-greening bushes on the lawn of Wayland Hall. Alma and Ida had arrived at twenty minutes to eight and had sought cover until they were assured of a clear coast. After five minutes' wait, during which time no one left the Hall, they decided it was safe to proceed on their way.

"Hurry and open the door," whispered Ida in an agony of suspense as Alma fumbled in a small purse for the key. "This porch light is a dead give-away."

"Ah-h-h!" Alma drew a soft breath of satisfaction as the key turned smoothly in the lock.

First glance showing them an empty hall, they fled up the stairs like true conspirators. Reaching the second floor they made for a door at near the south end. Ere they were half way to it it opened. Quick as a flash they dodged into it.

Three-quarters of an hour later a young woman in evening frock and cape stepped serenely out on the veranda of the Hall. She steered a straight course for the gymnasium. At intervals of ten minutes apart two more young women emerged from the Hall and hurried gymnasiumward. Each one of

the trio was securely certain she had not been observed.

The concert came to an end at ten o'clock. It had been as well received as had the other entertainments of the season under the expert management of the good little firm of "Page & Dean." The usual pleasant hum of enthusiastic voices, uttering remarks congratulatory to those who had taken part, was heard as the large audience streamed out of the gym's wide doorway and into the star-studded night.

The Bertram freshies had attended in a body, with the exception of Charlotte Robbins. She had been a proud participant in the concert. Possessed of a full, sweet contralto voice, she had been asked to contribute a solo. Her chums were justly elated over "Charlie's rise." Augusta had planned a dinner to be given in her honor at Baretti's the next evening.

"Little old Bertram hasn't done so badly this year," exulted Flossie Hart as the merry crowd of chums mounted the steps of the Hall. "Gus made the team. We've all had small parts in the two plays the Travelers have given. Now Charlie has had her inning."

"You sang beautifully, Charlotte, truly you did," praised Gussie warmly. "Honestly, girls, I'm simply crazy over Marjorie Dean. She is the sweetest

girl I ever knew. I want to say it now because I once misjudged her so."

"I knew you'd see it some day, Gus," broke in Calista Wilmot. "I'm as glad as you that we have all amounted to a little as freshies. It is nice to be noticed, rather than have to be always in the background."

It was in this happy frame of mind that Gussie and her companions climbed the stairs to their room.

The mild hazing to which Augusta and Flossie had been subjected earlier in the year had prompted them to lock the door of their room while at meals or when both were out in the evening. The persecution having stopped as suddenly as it had begun, gradually they grew careless. On this particular evening they had not locked their door.

Gussie, being a foot or two in advance of Flossie, half opened the door and felt for the button to throw on the electric light. The nearest hall light was several doors from her room. Hence the interior of the room was in comparative darkness. She uttered an impatient exclamation as her exploring fingers failed to find the button. She took a quick step into the room only to discover that something had suddenly happened to her feet. The soles of her satin evening slippers had acquired something which crackled and rustled and clung. She cried

out and lurched clumsily forward in her amazement, only to trip against something else which threw her headlong against the center table.

"For goodness' sake, Flossie, keep out!" she loudly warned. "Go for some matches. We've been hazed again. Oh, why didn't I lock the door?"

Her warning came too late. Florence had followed her, only to find her own feet immeshed in the same sticky trap.

"It's fly paper, that's what it is," she sputtered. Floundering into the hall, she now called out in wrathful discovery. "Wait until I free my slippers of it and I'll go for some matches."

Out in the hall Flossie ripped her slippers clear of the sticky paper with a forceful hand. Rolling it into a loose ball she started with it for the stairs, her indignation running high. Meanwhile Gussie had flapped to the open door and was engaged in ridding her own slippers of the incumbrance.

Straight to Miss Remson's own room sped Flossie, determined this time to spare no one. She and Gussie had heretofore silently endured—but no more of it. A few excited sentences and the manager, who had also just returned from the concert, was hurriedly accompanying her upstairs, a lighted candle and a box of matches in hand.

Examination by candle rays of the spot where the electric push button should be showed that it was

still there, but temporarily eclipsed. It had been neatly covered over by a smooth piece of cardboard tacked securely to the wall. In the dark the feel of the cardboard would be similar to that of the wall paper. The cardboard ripped off and the light thrown on, the havoc, already partially revealed by candle light, showed only too baldly. What Gussie had fallen over was one of three wooden soap boxes. These had been placed in a row and covered with a blue serge coat belonging to her. On the top of the middle one was a quart can of white paint. Stumbling, she had tipped it over and it now plentifully bedecked her coat, the rug, the skirt of her turquoise blue evening frock and her blue satin slippers.

From door to center table, from table to the two chiffoniers, which stood at each end of the room, were spread sheets of sticky fly paper. The two couch beds had been dismantled, and the mattresses, pillows and bed clothing had disappeared. Every mirror in the room had been painted in large checks of red and blue. On one of the dressing tables was coiled a huge mottled rubber snake which elicited a general cry of horror on first sight. The door of both girls' dress closets stood wide open, revealing every item of wearing apparel in each, lying in disorderly heaps on the floor.

The crowning outrage was a crude effigy of Gus-

sie made from a handkerchief bag and a dark green velvet one-piece frock of hers on a hanger. The handkerchief bag, stuffed, served as a head; the frock on the hanger, the body. Gussie's blue velvet sports hat topped the effigy. The whole figure had been smeared with very thick molasses and feathered. The feathers had come from one of the couch pillows, the slashed case of which lay on the floor. It was a decidedly discouraging sight. The three shocked, amazed women gazed dumbly at the damaged room.

"A band of savages couldn't have done much more," was Miss Remson's curt opinion. "You girls had better move into the room Miss Langly formerly occupied for the night. Your bedding will have to be found. It is in the house somewhere, I presume. It is too late to make inquiries about it tonight. There will be a searching inquiry tomorrow in this house or my name is not Miranda Remson. Such vandalism against another student! To say nothing of the damage done to the room! The rug is ruined by that white paint. A workman alone can remove the paint from the mirrors. Dear knows where the bedding is. Shocking, and disgusting!"

Seized by a sudden thought, Gussie went to one of the open window and leaned far out. Presently she left the window and announced: "I think the

bedding is on the ground under the windows. Please let Flossie and I go down and see. If it is there, we can bring it in at the back door, and up the back staircase. No one will see us. The mattresses are light. I can carry them, one at a time. Flossie can carry the smaller pieces. I'd rather stay in my own room tonight, if I can."

Flossie, meanwhile, had been engaged in gathering up the fly paper and putting the room partly to rights. Miss Remson having given a reluctant consent, the two freshmen went down stairs on the trail of the lost bedding. As Gussie had thought, there it was, under the windows from which it had been dumped to the ground.

The chimes had sung a silvery eleven and the wall clock ticked off half an hour more before a semblance of order settled down upon the outraged room. Miss Remson had long since left the two victims of the hazing.

"You know who did this?" interrogated Gussie, the moment the manager had retired from the room.

"I don't know, but I think it was Miss Walbert and some of her pals," quickly returned Flossie. "What's the use of suspecting her when one can't prove a single thing against her? She chose a good night. Who can prove that she wasn't at the concert?"

"We can't," returned Gussie gloomily. "I wish

I had just one little proof against her. I believe some of the team helped her. Alma Hurst dislikes me most. Perhaps she was mixed up in it. Miss Remson is going to call a meeting. It won't do any good. It will only put the hazers on their guard. One real bit of proof against Elizabeth Walbert would do more good than forty meetings."

CHAPTER XXV

THE PROOF

The real bit of proof was nearer her hand then Augusta had dreamed. Not until the following evening did she have time to take apart the sticky effigy of herself. Then she ran her fingers into the handkerchief bag to ascertain what had been used for stuffing. She withdrew her hand, clutching something of harder substance than lace collars and handkerchiefs. She looked at her find in amazement. It was a bracelet watch. More, it did not belong to either herself or Flossie.

The heavy gold back of the little watch was monogrammed with the letters E. A. W. Gussie's eyes lighted in triumph. Dexterously she picked open the back of the watch. She remembered that many girls had their full names written on a thin inside case, particularly if the watch were very valuable. There was more chance of a return in case of loss. Surely enough, on the inner plate appeared Elizabeth Walbert's full name. Gussie had her bit of proof. In stuffing the handkerchief bag, the watch

had evidently become unclasped and remained in the bag. In her hurry to finish and be gone the marauder had not even missed it.

Gussie's subdued shout of elation startled Flossie, who was writing a theme. A few minutes' talk and the two went down to Miss Remson's office, there to remain for some time. The manager had called a meeting directly after dinner that evening. She had asked every student present, separately and on honor, whether they had any part in the outrage of the evening before. Each had answered in the negative. She was naturally at sea. It was possible that the mischief had been done by outside students.

Gussie's information served to bring back Leila's warning of early fall against Elizabeth Walbert. Pledging both freshmen to secrecy, Miss Remson made a lengthy call on Doctor Matthews the next morning.

The ring leader in the mischief had gone to her classes that morning feeling complacently secure. She had said "No" to Miss Remson's stern inquiry with an expression of utter innocence in her widely-opened blue eyes. A telephone call for Elizabeth at luncheon hour, requesting her to report at Doctor Matthews' office at two o'clock that afternoon caused her no great trepidation. She immediately jumped to the conclusion that Marjorie had at last reported her for the accident to the elderly woman

on the highway. She had long since framed her defense, intending to place the blame squarely upon her accusers.

What she did not expect to see was a familiar bit of jewelry reposing on the president's desk. Possessed of a good deal of jewelry, and very careless with it, she had not, as yet, missed the watch. She owned two others, as well, and kept poor track of them. She had forgotten all about having worn it while upsetting Gussie's room.

Her memory was soon refreshed in a way that drove the color from her cheeks and took away her greatest prop, conceited self-assurance. She tried to deny her own watch. Her name on the inner case merely added fuel to the doctor's wrath. Her complete downfall came with a burst of hysterical weeping, of which anger formed a large part. Pinned down to a confession, she did not hesitate to name her two allies. They were also sent for, and before they left the office sentence had been pronounced upon all three. They were given the regulation seven days to pack and notify their families. They were also held for damage to property and ordered to make monetary restitution.

Gussie and Florence utterly refused to accept a penny from the three for their personal losses. Miss Remson, however, accepted a settlement for the damage done to the room.

With their departure went the last really pernicious element in Hamilton College. Elizabeth Walbert had been, if anything, more unscrupulous than Leslie Cairns. Lack of a certain sense of balance, which Leslie had possessed, had prompted her to enjoy a kind of malicious mischief of which Leslie would not have entertained a thought.

"Well, your last enemy has been routed in confusion, beautiful Bean. I just saw her depart in a station taxi. Guess she sent her car home ahead of her." Jerry came in from the campus late one afternoon with this pleasing information.

"Glad of it." Marjorie looked up from a translation she was making. "She's to blame for my trouble with Miss Susanna, indirectly. She deserved expulsion. I felt sorry for the Sans, a little. I don't feel sorry for her. I think she was outrageous; worse even in disposition than Rowena Farnham."

Jerry agreed, glad to see Marjorie evince resentment against the disgraced junior. She realized that nothing save the utmost bitterness of spirit could have wrung that denunciation from her charitable room-mate. Jerry knew how deeply Marjorie felt the loss of Miss Susanna's friendship and wished she could in some way manage to set things to rights between them.

The more she thought about it the more she felt impelled to go to Hamilton Arms and "have it out" with Miss Susanna. It lacked only two days until May Day, when she definitely decided to go on May Day evening and plead Marjorie's cause. The fact that Miss Susanna had evidently not reported Elizabeth Walbert was to Jerry an indication of her leniency toward Marjorie. Jerry shrewdly suspected that the old lady would welcome a peace ambassador.

On May Day evening, at a little after seven o'clock, she lifted the heavy knocker of the Arms and waited rather sheepishly for an answer to her ring. She had not the least idea of what she should say to Miss Susanna, provided the latter would see her.

Jonas greeted her with delighted surprise in his fine old face. "I'm so glad you came, Miss Jerry," he said. "She'll be glad, too. She misses the little girl, God bless her."

Jerry felt a slight catch in her throat at the words. They were precisely like two pathetic old children, she thought, who had lost a merry playmate. Jonas' prediction that Miss Hamilton would be glad to see her was verified. She shook hands with Jerry, then she kissed her. Next she took out her handkerchief and wiped away a few tears which had welled to her eyes. Then the two sat down for

a long talk. Jerry did most of the talking. Miss Susanna listened like a thirsty plant greedily absorbing water.

"It was all my fault," the old lady declared contritely. "I was upset by the fall, and crotchety. I wouldn't give my poor child a hearing. Worse, I didn't answer her letter. I was still provoked with her when I received it. Later, I came to my senses. But I haven't forgotten her. I have done something for her that she'll like. Just think! Two years ago she came here all by herself and hung that violet May basket! I have been happier since then. Now we must get back to our good times again. If any of you simpletons of girls had come to see me before we could have straightened this snarl long ago."

Jerry laughed at this last. "It's true, Miss Susanna," she agreed, "we were simpletons. Leila spoke of coming over here once to me. I told her I would go, except I thought Marjorie would not like us to do so."

"I should have answered her letter. I wasn't fair to her. I am going to write her a little note this evening. Jerry, will you be my messenger? This is Uncle Brooke's birthday, you know. Marjorie will like to hear from me tonight on that very account. You go into the Chinese room and talk

to Jonas, while I'm writing it. That is his favorite haunt. He always reads his paper in there."

Jerry was quite willing to interview Jonas in the Chinese room. She loved the room and she thought Jonas the most interesting old man she had ever seen. She wished she could induce him to speak of Brooke Hamilton. She liked the idea of having some interesting bit of information concerning the latter to take back to Marjorie.

Being an exceedingly clever young person, she skilfully drew Jonas out to talk of the founder of Hamilton. He told her several incidents of his former employer's life that were of vivid interest. The most amazing bit of information she gleaned from Jonas, however, was the fact that the old man had attended the performance of both plays and the concert as well.

"Miss Susanna was anxious I should attend them," he explained, his face breaking into a crinkle of little smiling lines that Jerry thought beautiful. "But I should have gone to them, at any rate. Tell our Sunshine girl so for me. Tell her, too, that if she had lived in Mr. Brooke's time she would have been his staunchest supporter and ally. Her interest in the college he loved comes second to his own."

The old servitor's deep voice echoed through the spacious room. For an instant Jerry was seized by

the eerie fancy that the departed Brooke Hamilton himself had been speaking.

When Jerry left Hamilton Arms it was nearly nine o'clock. Jonas insisted on accompanying her to the campus gates. Darkness had fallen and there was no moonshine until after midnight. Jerry carried with her the note and an immense round bunch of double, sweet-scented garden violets; these last, Miss Susanna's peace-offering to Marjorie.

"Oh! Um-m! How sweet!" Marjorie caught the fragrance of the violets the moment Jerry entered the room. She cried out with pleasure as she saw the perfumed purple blossoms. "Where have you been? Who gave you those perfectly lovely violets, Jeremiah?"

"Guess where I've been." Jerry advanced to the table where Marjorie sat with her books. She dropped the note and the flowers directly in front of her chum.

"Why, Jeremiah!" Marjorie cried out. First glance at the note and she had recognized that familiar fine hand. Such violets as those she now held to her flushed face grew only at Hamilton Arms. "I—I—don't see——" she began. Then her curly head went down on the table, supported by one rounded arm.

When she raised it again two or three tears trembled on her long lashes, but a smile irradiated

her face. "I wondered where you had gone, Jerry," she said tremulously. "Now I know. And you did it for me! I don't have to read Miss Susanna's note to know that everything is all right again. I only have to look at these violets. Mr. Brooke Hamilton's favorite flower and today was his birthday! It's just two years tonight since I hung the May basket on Miss Susanna's door. She said after we came to know her that the violets that night seemed like a message from him. Somehow I feel that way about these violets. He planted them and tended them. They are like a fragrant message of good will from him."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CITATION

Before Marjorie saw Miss Susanna, who had invited her in the note to come to Hamilton Arms to dinner on Friday, another surprise was in store for her. She had paid no special attention to a notice which appeared on the main bulletin board the day after she had received the violets from Miss Susanna. It stated that a full attendance of students was requested on Friday morning in the chapel.

"What's going to happen at chapel, I wonder, that we are all ordered to be there?" commented Muriel Harding that evening, at the usual nightly confab.

"Special notices to be read, very likely," surmised Ronny. "From now on, we'll begin to hear them. It's not very long until Commencement, children."

"Don't speak of it." Jerry held up a protesting hand. "I think I ought to have at least four more years of education. I'm not half educated. I don't

want to leave Hamilton this June, knowing I'm not coming back to it."

This in a measure was the attitude the others were gradually taking. With the growth of the new dormitory project came the earnest longing "to stay just one more year" and see its furtherance. On the other hand there were the home folks to be considered. Marjorie in particular felt that her captain would not care to spare her away from home another year. Nor would she ask that permission.

When on Friday morning row upon row of more or less lovely girl faces, each with its own particular charm of youth, lined the large auditorium of the chapel, no pair of bright eyes missed the significance of Doctor Matthews' presence and that of the entire Board. Something out of the ordinary was about to take place.

Morning exercises over, Doctor Matthews proceeded to address the scrupulously attentive assemblage.

"It may not be known to many students present," he said, "that the college has very little data concerning its noble founder, Brooke Hamilton. We know that he planned this monument to learning on a broad and magnificent scale. We know that he superintended the erection of the buildings. We know that he spent his life near it, at Hamilton

Arms; that the town of Hamilton, Hamilton Highway, West Hamilton—all these bear his honored name."

At the words, "Brooke Hamilton," the sharper interest of the original Nine Travelers became focussed upon the president. Something of exceptional interest to them was certain to follow the mention of that name. Nor was the pith of the doctor's discourse long in coming. Their interest deepened to astonishment as they heard him presently take up the subject of the maxims of Hamilton's founder. Not only did he quote the five already framed and hung in the college buildings. He also quoted the other ten on the illuminated oblong in the founder's study at Hamilton Arms.

Jerry was the first to catch the drift of the address. She recalled Miss Susanna's words in speaking of Marjorie: "I have done something for her that she'll like." She thought she now understood. Marjorie was to receive a citation. Miss Susanna had planned the honor undoubtedly.

Jerry had not gone so far as even to dream that there might be others also entitled to this high honor. The announcement of Marjorie's name presently confirmed her conjecture. When Leila's, Helen's, her own name, and, in fact, those of the others who made up Miss Susanna's nine young friends followed Marjorie's, Jerry began to see

stars. The tenth name, Robin Page, sent an electric shock through them all. Robin had not known Miss Susanna, but the latter had certainly known her through Marjorie's generous praise.

Asked to rise in their places, the ten seniors, thus to be honored, listened to a citation of their good deeds which made their cheeks burn and their hearts beat faster. Miss Susanna Hamilton, it appeared, had been very busy in their behalf.

President Matthews addressed each girl in turn by name, reciting the maxim to be hung in her honor and stating the place on the campus the framed tribute would occupy. Miss Susanna had shown her marked affection for Marjorie in the choice of motto she had made. Marjorie's maxim was, "The ways of light reach upward toward eternity."

While no demonstrations of approbation were permitted in chapel, the air was full of repressed acclamation which would be presently set free outside. The turn of the tide for democracy had occurred almost four years before when the ten seniors thus elevated to distinction and a few other loyal spirits had set their faces firmly against snobbery and false principles. Now they were to experience the full sweep of the waves of approbation on which their classmates proposed to launch them.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten morning. Every-

one was late to first recitations, and no one cared. Aside from the citations themselves, another glorious fact stood forth clearly. In some marvelous manner those who had received the honor of citation had been instrumental in ending the estrangement of long standing between the college and the great-niece of its reverend founder.

Coming in late that afternoon, Marjorie found a summons to Doctor Matthews' office awaiting her. The time set was three o'clock of the following afternoon. She smiled as she read the few lines penned by the doctor. She was fairly positive that he wished to question her regarding her friendship with Miss Susanna. Lucy had said at luncheon that the doctor was anxious to talk with her.

In the midst of her own happiness, Marjorie thought rather sadly of how different had been the purpose of the summons received by the Sans and Elizabeth Walbert. She wondered if the parents of many of these girls had not been cut to the heart over their utter failure. A silent song of rejoicing welled within her soul that she had nothing but good reports to present to her sujerior officers. She was glad her ways had been ways of light.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONCLUSION

"I CAN'T believe it's true. Pinch my arm, Robin; not very hard, just enough to make me know I'm awake." It was Marjorie who made this request.

It was late in the afternoon of Commencement Day and the original Nine Travelers, Robin and Phyllis Moore, were holding a brief farewell rendezvous in Marjorie's and Jerry's room. Their elders and relatives who had come to Hamilton to see their own graduated were scattered about the campus. The eleven girls had claimed the privilege of one last little private session as an expression of their overflowing feelings. Jerry, the zealous, had managed to "round them up" and order them to report at four o'clock in hers and Marjorie's room.

"It's true." Robin accompanied the assurance with a gentle pinch. "Out of the darkness has come light. I wish we could do something for Miss Susanna to prove our gratitude."

"I said that to her this morning," Marjorie re-

turned. "She said 'there is only one thing any of you could do for me,—come back to Hamilton next year. Now I know you are not free to do that. It rests with your parents. I suppose you will not be coming back to college. Well, you can at least make me a visit; singly, doubly, severally, or all at once.' "

"Would you like to come back, Marjorie?" asked Phyllis. "I ask because I know how your heart has been set on furthering the dormitory project."

"Yes, I should," Marjorie answered honestly. "Now that this wonderful thing has happened, I can't bear not to be here next year. I know that you and Barbara and the new Travelers we've chosen will look after things as well, if not better, than we have, but it seems hard to be so far away when the real work is going to begin. I understand why Mr. Brooke Hamilton wished to be near the campus when the college buildings were being erected."

The "wonderful thing" to which Marjorie referred was in the nature of an announcement made at the Commencement exercises that morning. Miss Susanna Hamilton had, through the offices of President Matthews, presented to her young friend, Marjorie Dean, a clear title to the lower block of houses west of the campus, formerly owned by her.

"Miss Dean has devoted her earnest effort to securing a site on which to erect a dormitory to be devoted to the housing of students in reduced circumstances. Such students are entitled to their time for study rather than the performance of extra work in order to pay their expenses. It is my wish that Miss Dean shall use the properties with which I now present her as a site for the dormitory of her dreams.

"Signed,

"Susanna Craig Hamilton."

This last paragraph of a letter, written to Doctor Matthews by Miss Hamilton, and read out at the exercises, produced a sensation in collegiate circles. Doctor Matthews had called on Miss Hamilton, shortly before Commencement Day, asking her to attend the exercises as his honored guest. The eccentric old lady had refused flatly.

"No, I haven't forgiven the college, altogether. You must let me alone. I am what I am, and I don't often change. I owed my little friend, Marjorie Dean, a reparation. I have made it in the way I thought she would like best. Personally, you are the most sensible and true gentleman I have known on a college staff since my great-uncle passed out. If they had all been like you—but they haven't been."

The good doctor had smiled openly at Miss Susanna's avowed hard-heartedness. He had an idea that time would do its perfect work in closing the breach between herself and Hamilton, now that Marjorie had pointed the way.

"While we are on the subject," declared Leila, "I wonder how many of us here could come back if we wished. Don't all speak at once. As for Irish Leila,—her time is as good here as anywhere."

"I can come back," Vera immediately said. "I have really nothing in the way of social aspirations. Father would let me come back for one year; maybe more. If I come back for five or six years, I'd be a colossus of learning if not one in stature."

"I'm not sure that I can, but I'll coax hard at home," assured Helen. "Miss Remson said last night that she would hold our rooms until the middle of July for any of us who knew by that time we were coming back."

"Kathie's already here. If mother will let me, I'll add another year of biology and work for the doctor to my collegiate budget." Lucy made this announcement with a touch of excitement.

"I can come back if I feel like it." Jerry cast an almost gloomy look at Marjorie as she spoke. She was not relishing the prospect without Marjorie as a room-mate.

"I'm not sure. It will depend on what my father

says. I have been away from him the greater part of four years." This from Ronny. "Last summer he talked of spending a winter in the East. If he decides to do that he will be in New York. In that event I could probably come back to Hamilton, but,"—Ronny also looked straight at Marjorie.

"I can do as I please about coming back. I thought I might, if——" Robin's eyes found the same resting place as those of the others. "We want you to come back, too, Marjorie. We can't get along without you," she said with friendly abruptness.

"I don't know." A hint of distress crept into Marjorie's brown eyes. "I have never mentioned such a thing to Captain. I'd feel selfish in doing so. She has waited patiently for me to finish college so that I may be at home with her. She has never said she wanted me to stay at home after I was graduated. I suppose she never thought I would care to come back as a P. G. If you girls are free to come back, I wish you would. You could be of so much help to the others. I'll be able to get here two or three times during the college year, at least. Robin and I will have to come here sometime this summer to see how the work of tearing down those properties is progressing. I'll say this. If the way should happen to clear for me to come back a P. G., that means if Captain should be willing and really

anxious for me to return to Hamilton, because she knows how greatly my heart is in our enterprise, then I'll certainly be here next fall. That is as much of a promise as I can make."

"I feel in my prophetic Celtic bones that you will come back," predicted Leila. "Your Captain is too wise not to know your secret ambitions. She will be presently driving you back to college. You may expect me in my same old room next year, and——" Leila smiled her wide, engaging smile, "I shall expect to see you, Beauty, ornamenting the campus as of old. You may tell me then that I am a soothsayer."

THE END